

The *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū*

Introduction and Partial Translation

by James G. Wagner

THE *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū*,¹ or 'The Collection of Lady Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu', is a somewhat disjointed work, a combination of diary and collection of *tanka* poems with prose contexts. As is true of most court ladies, very little is known about the life of its author, Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu (or simply Ukyō no Daibu).² It appears that she was born about 1157³ to Fujiwara no Koreyuki⁴ and Yūgiri,⁵ the daughter of Ōmiwa no Motomasa.⁶ Neither of her parents was of any particular social consequence, but both were born into families long connected with the arts.

Her father was descended from the founder of the Sesonji⁷ school of calligraphy, Fujiwara no Yukinari (Kōzei),⁸ and was himself a skilled calligrapher. He was also a musician and a scholar, known principally for his *Genji Monogatari Shaku*,⁹ the earliest known commentary on the great novel. Ukyō no Daibu's maternal grandfather, Ōmiwa no Motomasa, was a prominent flautist serving, as the Ōmiwa family traditionally had, in the Bureau of Music.¹⁰ His daughter Yūgiri was a musician in her own right, being a renowned performer on the thirteen-stringed zithern.¹¹ Her reputation was sufficiently high for her to have taught a number of important pupils, among whom was Ukyō no Daibu's father. It is not surprising, then, that the offspring of two such people should also have had an

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¹ 建禮門院右京大夫集

² For a detailed discussion of some of the problematic aspects of her life, see Hon'iden Shigeyoshi 本位田重美, *Hyōchū Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū Zenshaku* 評註建禮門院右京大夫集全釈, Musashino Shoin 武蔵野書院, 1950, pp. 6-82, and Tomikura Tokujirō 富倉徳次郎, *Ōchō no Hika: Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu* 王朝の悲歌: 建禮門院右京大夫, Kōbundō 弘文堂,

1970, pp. 9-110.

³ Hon'iden, pp. 20-1, states that her birth was probably no later than 1158 and possibly no earlier than 1156, but the evidence is extremely circumstantial.

⁴ 藤原伊行, c. 1128-1175. Hon'iden, pp. 15-6.

⁵ 夕霧, c. 1124-c. 1179. Hon'iden, pp. 7-19.

⁶ 大神基政, 1079-1138.

⁷ 世尊寺

⁸ 藤原行成, 972-1027.

⁹ 源氏物語釋.

¹⁰ *Gagakuryō* 雅樂寮

¹¹ *Sō no koto* 箏の琴

artistic bent. Ukyō no Daibu was, it seems, highly regarded for her calligraphy and for her ability on the zithern, both of which skills must have served her well when she went to court.

Ukyō no Daibu probably entered the service of the consort of Emperor Takakura,¹² Taira no Tokushi¹³ (later Kenreimon'in), about the year 1173. From the headnote to the second poem of her collection,¹⁴ we know that she was at court on New Year's Day 1174, and it is unlikely that she had been there for long. It was at this time that she acquired the name by which she is now known, although its origin is somewhat unclear.¹⁵ The first element of Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu is, of course, the *ingō*¹⁶ of Tokushi, but the second part is problematical. However, since Koreyuki's grandfather and other relations held the office of Ukyō no Daibu (Intendant of the Right Division of the Capital), it seems reasonable to assume that Koreyuki, too, possessed the title at one time and that it is from her father that Ukyō no Daibu derived her name.¹⁷

Although Ukyō no Daibu's court service lasted less than six years, it was, judging from her poetry collection, the period which influenced her most profoundly. In the retinue of the Imperial Consort, she came to know the Taira courtiers and ladies in all their splendor, while their fortunes were still on the rise. There she met the many friends whose loss during the Gempei War would grieve her so deeply. And there she fell in love with Taira no Sukemori¹⁸, the man whose memory she treasured for the rest of her life.

Their relationship was far from perfect. It appears, at least from Ukyō no Daibu's point of view, that Sukemori treated her rather badly. For a time she took up with the painter and poet Fujiwara no Takanobu,¹⁹ but as Sukemori's situation became more and more precarious, he and Ukyō no Daibu were again drawn together. Once the Taira had left the Capital, Ukyō no Daibu was deprived of the object of her affection, but despite his absence, or perhaps because of it, her love for him seems to have grown deeper. After Sukemori's death, her grief and idealized love mingled with her sadness at the passing of her youth and of a more gracious age. Her grief seems actually to have sustained her. Mourning for Sukemori and for a vanished world became her sole *raison d'être*, giving her life a sense of meaning and worth.

¹² 高倉天皇, r. 1169-80.

¹³ 平徳子

¹⁴ Poems from the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* are numbered as in the text published in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi 久松藩一 *et al.*, ed., *Heian Kamakura Shikashū* 平安鎌倉私家集 (NKBT, 80), Iwanami Shoten, 1964, pp. 415-511.

¹⁵ Interestingly enough, we know from her poetry collection that Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu is the name by which she wished to be known to posterity. See her exchange of poems with Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 at the time of the compilation of the *Shinchokusenshū*

新勅選集, poems 358 & 359.

¹⁶ 院號, retirement name.

¹⁷ Tomikura, p. 25. See, however, Hon'idem, pp. 21-32, for an interesting but highly speculative theory that Ukyō no Daibu received her name because she was the adoptive daughter of the great poet Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成, who was Intendant of the Right Division of the Capital at the time of her entry into court society.

¹⁸ 平資盛, d. 1185.

¹⁹ 藤原隆信, 1142-1205.

Ukyō no Daibu was eventually forced to withdraw from court service, probably sometime in 1178 for we know that she was absent from the rituals surrounding the birth of the future Emperor Antoku²⁰ in the eleventh month of that year.²¹ That she was unwilling to retire is clear,²² but her reasons for leaving are not. Although one can imagine a number of scandalous possibilities, it seems most likely that since her mother died in the following year, Ukyō no Daibu was prompted to return home by her mother's illness.²³

From the time of her withdrawal from Tokushi's service until her return to court seventeen years later, very little is known of her activities or whereabouts. Shortly after her mother's death, Ukyō no Daibu moved from Higashiyama to Nishiyama and at some time lived with her brother, the priest Son'en, in his quarters at Hosshōji.²⁴ After the Gempei War, probably in 1186, she visited Kenreimon'in at Ōhara and subsequently went on a pilgrimage to Sakamoto on Mt Hiei. But that is all that we know.

About the year 1195, Ukyō no Daibu returned to court, entering the service of Emperor Go-Toba at the relatively advanced age of thirty-eight.²⁵ She remained in his retinue at least until after his abdication, but how long after is not known.²⁶ Except for isolated incidents noted in her poetry collection, the remaining thirty-seven or more years of her life are a virtual blank. The date of her death is unknown, but from an exchange of poems with Fujiwara no Teika at the time of the compilation of the ninth imperial anthology, the *Shinchokusenshū* (poems 358 & 359), we know that Ukyō no Daibu was still alive in 1232 at the unusually old age of seventy-five.

The three-quarters of a century spanned by Ukyō no Daibu's life was one of the most tumultuous and eventful periods in Japanese history. Around the time of her birth, the power of provincial warrior families to interfere in central affairs was beginning to become quite evident (witness the Hōgen and Heiji disturbances). By the time of her death, the lines of authority had been thoroughly redrawn. The centuries-old central governing structure had been challenged by a provincial warrior organization, and the nobility had discovered itself powerless to resist its own forced separation from control of its sources of economic power. A military regime, organized along non-traditional lines and with its own clearly defined jurisdictions, had been established, and the locus of power (if not of prestige) was shifted to the East for the next century.

By the time Ukyō no Daibu entered court service, the Taira, through the efforts of Kiyomori,²⁷ had risen to heights of power and status unprecedented for

²⁰ 安徳天皇, r. 1180–85.

²¹ See poem 125: Hisamatsu, p. 444.

²² See poem 123: *ibid.*, p. 444.

²³ Hon'iden, pp. 56–7.

²⁴ 尊圓, fl. c. 1175; 法性寺.

²⁵ 後鳥羽天皇, r. 1183–95; Hon'iden, p. 40, suggests that she entered the Emperor's service

in the autumn of 1195, while Tomikura, p. 199, gives 1194.

²⁶ Murai Jun 村井順, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū Hyōkai* 建礼門院右京大夫集評解, Yūseidō 有精堂, 1971, p. 215. At that time she was known as Ichi no In no Ukyō no Daibu.

²⁷ 平清盛, 1118–81.

a warrior family. Kiyomori had been appointed to (and subsequently retired from) the exalted office of prime minister,²⁸ his daughter was consort to the reigning emperor, and Kiyomori was soon to become the grandfather of a crown prince.

However, Kiyomori was growing restive in his client status to the cloistered emperor Go-Shirakawa.²⁹ Furthermore, the configuration of power and interests that had brought the retired emperor and the Taira together a decade before had changed, and Kiyomori and Go-Shirakawa were now in opposition. In 1179, in response to a number of pressures, Kiyomori executed a *coup d'état*, placing the retired emperor under house arrest and eliminating all opposition from the ranks of the court bureaucracy. In the following year, his grandson became emperor, and Kiyomori's position appeared unassailable. However, before his death in 1181, Kiyomori was to witness the beginning of the collapse of his family's fortunes.

In 1180 Minamoto no Yoritomo³⁰ called for the chastisement of the Taira and began organizing a military governing body based on his personal confirmation of lands and titles. Yoritomo's actions in the Kanto in turn sparked local uprisings against central authority throughout the country. The Taira were unable, through the traditional structure of government to which their power was tied, to appeal to provincial discontents. Having neither adherents in the Capital nor a secure power base in the provinces, they found their own resources inadequate to combat the depredations of rebellious warriors or the advances of the Minamoto. In 1183 the Taira, with the child-emperor Antoku, fled the Capital before the forces of Kiso no Yoshinaka.³¹ After a disastrous defeat at Ichinotani in 1184, they wandered here and there about the Inland Sea until their final destruction at Dannoura in the third month of 1185.

Compared to the massive release of anti-government and anti-authoritarian energies of the Gempei War period and the subsequent reordering of society, the battles between the Minamoto and the Taira were of little importance. In fact the struggle between the two families was marked by a distinct lack of interest in actual confrontation. Nonetheless, these campaigns have inspired an enormous body of literature, including at least three military tales (*gunki monogatari*), numerous *noh*, *jōruri*, and kabuki plays, and countless songs and ballads of all kinds. The rapid rise and dizzying fall of one family's fortunes and the pitting of courtiers (though, in fact, the Taira were mere upstart provincials) against rude, uncultured Eastern warriors have provided almost limitless material for literary invention.

Differing from these works are the diaries, memoirs, and poetry collections, such as the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū*, in which the authors react not to monumental political and social changes or, again, to the workings of karma, but to very personal sorts of misfortune: the passing of a period of excitement and beauty in their

²⁸ *Daijōdaijin* 太政大臣

²⁹ 後白河天皇, r. 1155-8.

³⁰ 源賴朝, 1147-99.

³¹ 木曾義仲, 1154-84.

own lives, the loss of friends, and, in the case of Ukyō no Daibu, the death of her by then idealized lover.

The *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū* is a so-called 'personal poetry collection',³² containing 359 *tanka* poems and their headnotes. Of these, 305 are Ukyō no Daibu's own compositions, and the remaining fifty-four are by twenty-six other individuals. The poems are arranged not in the conventional sequence of seasonal, love, and miscellaneous poems, but roughly in the order of their composition, with the exception of the first and last poems, which provide a kind of introduction and conclusion for the collection as a whole. About one hundred poems, most of them in a half-dozen or so groups, either lack headnotes altogether or are prefaced only by conventional topics.³³ For the most part, however, the headnotes are more elaborate, on occasion running to several hundred words in length. In fact, the longer headnotes quite overshadow the poems they are meant to introduce. A series of such headnotes reads as an extended passage of prose interspersed with poems, giving Ukyō no Daibu's poetry collection the feeling, at times, of a diary or memoir. This characteristic accounts for the fact that the work is often classified under the generic heading of *nikki*, or 'diary', since it is in many ways comparable to examples such as the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, the *Sanuki no Suke no Nikki*,³⁴ and the like.

The contents of the collection can be divided into four major sections. The first deals, after the introductory poem, with incidents and ceremonies at Court and with Ukyō no Daibu's love affairs. The following section (poems 123 to 203), beginning with her withdrawal from court service, contains poems written on the occasion of her mother's death and at various stages in her relationship with Sukemori, and concludes with the death of ex-Emperor Takakura. If, in contrast to the general brightness and youthfulness of the first section, the second gives way to a darker mood, then the third is virtually black and sodden with tears of sorrow and self-pity. This section (204 to 321), which includes the portion translated below, concerns Sukemori's death, the misfortunes of Ukyō no Daibu's friends during the Gempei War and its aftermath, her visit to Ōhara, and her pilgrimage. This is followed by a number of miscellaneous poems, and the section concludes with the fifty-one Tanabata poems. The final section, apparently written some years later, concerns her return to court and isolated incidents of her middle years, and is characterized by a softer and more reflective grief and longing for the past. The collection ends with a concluding poem and the above-mentioned poetic exchange with Teika in about 1232, which was appended many years later.

Because of the existence of the introductory and concluding poems, scholars agree that Ukyō no Daibu undoubtedly edited her poetry collection herself.

³² *Shikashū* 私家集

³³ *Dai* 題. Notable among such groups is a very long series of 51 poems composed on

Tanabata, nos. 271-321: Hisamatsu, pp. 491-9.

³⁴ 和泉式部日記, 讃岐典侍日記.

The poems, we know, were composed over a period of nearly sixty-five years, the earliest (72 & 73) being written no later than 1169,³⁵ and the latest no earlier than 1232. The dates of the headnotes and the date and manner of compilation remain, however, in some doubt. The various arguments for this date or that seem to ignore the fact that we have no way of knowing whether Ukyō no Daibu's memory was reliable or not, and that older people often have a clear recollection of their younger days, whereas they may be quite confused about the present. Further, Ukyō no Daibu, like nearly every other writer of memoirs or a diary, East or West, probably used her imagination to fill in the gaps in her memory and rearranged or altered some events to suit her purposes. Indeed, it is remotely possible that a good deal of the prose matter is pure invention. After all, this poetic diary, though to an extent autobiographical, is not necessarily a true and complete record of Ukyō no Daibu's life.³⁶

Nonetheless, with these reservations in mind, it is plausible to assume that the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* is based on a body of poems which Ukyō no Daibu had gathered over the years and that the headnotes were either revised or added at a later time. From internal evidence and other factors, Hon'iden has concluded that the first three sections were brought together in 1188 or 1189.³⁷ As is true of a number of diaries and poetry collections, poems and recollections of various incidents were subsequently added from time to time, thus accounting for the lack of continuity and the significant time gaps which characterize the final section of the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū*. Because, among other reasons, there is no mention of the Jōkyū Incident of 1221, it appears that Ukyō no Daibu probably completed her collection sometime between 1213 and 1218.³⁸ Nakamura Shin'ichirō would like to believe that at the time of the compilation of the *Shinchokusenshū*, Ukyō no Daibu revised her entire collection before sending it to the editor Teika for consideration,³⁹ but, of course, there is no way of telling what sort of revisions might have taken place or when. It seems most likely that Ukyō no Daibu finished work on her collection during the Kempō⁴⁰ era, when she was in her late fifties or early sixties.

It was mentioned above that Ukyō no Daibu's poetry collection, while having autobiographical elements, is not necessarily a true record of her life. Neither is it an assemblage of what she probably considered her best poems from various poetry contests and hundred-poem sequences. What, then, were the principles on which her selection was based? Why choose these particular poems?

The best answer (though not a very precise one) can perhaps be found in her poetry collection itself. First the headnote to her introductory poem:

³⁵ Murai, p. 5; Tomikura, p. 24.

³⁶ Tomikura p. 137.

³⁷ Hon'iden, pp. 65-70.

³⁸ Tomikura, p. 132, opts for the earlier date, while Hon'iden, p. 67, believes that it was compiled around 1217-8.

³⁹ Nakamura Shin'ichirō 中村真一郎, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu (Nihon Shijin Sen 日本詩人選, 13)*, Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房, 1972, p. 9.

⁴⁰ 建保, 1213-9.

Personal poetry collections are things poets write. That is not what this is at all. Rather, I have simply written down, for my eyes alone to see, how I remember feeling at various times when I have been moved or saddened or have found something difficult to forget.

And from the headnote to her concluding poem:

While fated to have none but sad memories, the years of my life have piled up.
As I pass the days in useless idleness, I have written down, a little at a time,
these things which have come to mind.⁴¹

Here, then, is the avowed principle that guided her selection. Incidents and their attendant emotions rather than the poems written upon them were most important to her. This explains the inclusion of a great many mediocre poems and the preeminent position of the headnotes. It also helps to explain the fragmented and disjointed quality of the work.

Ukyō no Daibu's poetry collection has been called a record of her pure love for Sukemori. While this and a vague sense of loss and of the passage of time appear throughout the work, these themes do not give it a feeling of unity. Sections unrelated to Sukemori and the Taira occur frequently. The portion of the work translated below exhibits more thematic (if not narrative) cohesiveness than most other parts of the collection. Nevertheless, various sections, such as Ukyō no Daibu's appreciation of a starlit sky in poem 251 and its headnote, although probably in chronologically correct position, have no evident connections with the poems that precede and follow them. This factor distinguishes the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* from works of the *nikki* genre, such as the *Kagerō Nikki*⁴² and the *Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, which focus more consistently on a single theme. However, as mentioned before, the length of the headnotes has caused some scholars to hesitate to classify the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* as a personal poetry collection. They have instead isolated it in a class of its own as a somehow unique specimen. This is difficult to accept. If one must categorize, it is perhaps best to call the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* a personal poetry collection which partakes of various aspects of the diary-memoir genre, thus placing it squarely within the *nikki* tradition.

Ukyō no Daibu's poetry has very little to do with the poetic developments of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and consequently has distressed the literary historians by refusing to be neatly categorized. The standard histories of Japanese literature tend to place Ukyō no Daibu in a class by herself, treating her poetry style as an intensely individual development. Of course, there is no need to do this. It is simply that Ukyō no Daibu was a mediocre poet in an age of poetic giants. She seems to show no interest in the developing ideals of 'mystery and depth' (*yūgen*) and 'ethereal charm' (*yōen*)⁴³ of Shunzei⁴⁴ and Teika, nor does she possess the wit or verbal dexterity prized by the early classical poets. Her

⁴¹ Hisamatsu, pp. 415 & 510.

⁴² 蜻蛉日記

⁴³ 幽玄, 妖艶

⁴⁴ 俊成

compositions are, in general, unadorned, uncomplicated, and quite conventional. At the same time, the very prosaic, flat effect of some of her poems is similar to poetic effects deliberately cultivated a century later by the innovating Kyōgoku-Reizei⁴⁵ court poets. In this sense, she occasionally shows herself to be a precursor of later dominant trends in poetry. (See, for example, poems 237, 244, & 250.)

The fact that Ukyō no Daibu went to the trouble of compiling a poetry collection seems to indicate that, in spite of her protestations to the contrary, she considered her poetry to be of some importance. There is no indication, however, that her contemporaries shared her opinions. In spite of her connections with Shunzei and his family, none of her poems was selected for inclusion in either the *Senzaishū* or the *Shinkokinshū*.⁴⁶ It was not until the end of her life, when Teika's own tastes had turned from the *yūgen* and *yōen* ideals to a less complex style, that any of her poems were included in an imperial anthology.⁴⁷ After the development of the late classical style of court poetry, with its emphasis on surface simplicity, minute observation, and *makoto*,⁴⁸ Ukyō no Daibu's poetry became more highly valued. And not surprisingly, although she lacks the characteristic intensity of late classical poetry, her simple, declarative style, her deep involvement with her subject matter, and, at her best, her discovery of a new observed truth seem to have appealed to the Kyōgoku-Reizei poets. This is evidenced by the large number of her poems included in the fourteenth and seventeenth imperial anthologies, the *Gyokuyōshū* and the *Fūgashū*.

Modern Japanese critics, too, seem to be attracted to the quality of *makoto* in her poetry, but *makoto* in the modern sense of 'sincerity'. Most scholars admit that her poems are not very good, that they are weak, prosy, flat, and frequently as uninteresting as, to borrow the Japanese phrase, chewing on sand.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, in the simplicity and lack of verbal dexterity of these poems, these critics find an absence of artificiality, and an honesty and sincerity which appeal to them.

However, for these scholars and, one suspects, all readers, the primary value of the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* lies not in the poems but in their headnotes. Ukyō no Daibu's prose style is described as simple, artless, straightforward, and unembellished,⁵⁰ but it is also considered to have a certain gentleness and, above all, purity.

The surface simplicity and purity are deceptive, however, and should not be

⁴⁵ 京極冷泉

⁴⁶ 千載集, 新古今集

⁴⁷ Her poems eventually appeared 23 times in various imperial anthologies: two in *Shinshokukusenshū* (nos. 844 & 1100); ten in *Gyokuyōshū* 玉葉集 (nos. 1541, 1652, 1751, 1834, 1918, 2151, 2340, 2341, 2403 & 2485); six in *Fūgashū* 風雅集 (nos. 173, 1452, 1905, 1996, 1997 & 2175); one in *Shinsenzaishū* 新千載集 (no. 1888); one in *Shinshūishū* 新拾遺集 (no. 707); one in *Shingashūishū* 新後拾遺集 (no. 72); and two in

Shinshokukokinshū 新續古今集 (nos. 1570 & 2031).

⁴⁸ 眞, 'truth', 'verisimilitude'.

⁴⁹ Murai, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Ikeda Kikan calls her prose style 'commonplace' in comparison with that of Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 and Sei Shōnagon 清少納言: Ikeda Kikan 池田龜鑑, 'Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu no Kotodomo' 建禮門院右京大夫のことども, in *Kokugo to Kokubungaku* 國語と國文學 ix, 8 (August 1932), p. 178.

equated with artlessness. Ukyō no Daibu's sentence structure is by no means particularly complex, but her writing exhibits, at its best, a directness of apprehension and a careful attention to the selection and ordering of details (albeit frequently conventional ones) which is far from naïve. And it is these details which give the prose contexts their evocative, elegiac quality and their (one has to admit it) feeling of purity.

The *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* has variously been characterized as 'an outpouring of sincere emotions'⁵¹ and as 'the transforming of pure feelings into beauty'.⁵² It appears that, to the Japanese critics, what is most important about the work is its apparent honesty and sincerity, its ultimate truthfulness. Whether the incidents included in the collection actually happened or were fabricated, whether Ukyō no Daibu loved Sukemori or despised him, whether we are reading truth or fiction, has no bearing on the literary value of the work. Yet there is something, after all, to this matter of truth. Its significance lies not in the sincerity of Ukyō no Daibu's own feelings, but in the actuality of the historical events which surrounded her. Though admittedly this has no connection with the quality of her writing, there is no denying that the historical context enhances the modern reader's responses. In the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū*, the momentous events of that era are brought down to a human level to which the reader can easily respond. Those historical personages who have taken on mythical proportions over the centuries are brought poignantly to life. Thus, the historical background adds an extra-literary dimension to the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū*, which in turn serves as a deft foil to the accounts of the rise and fall of the Taira found in the dramas and warrior tales.

I have chosen to translate the following section of the *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū* because it contains some of Ukyō no Daibu's most moving and evocative writing (as well as, admittedly, a few dull poems). It admirably demonstrates the qualities for which the work is valued. It is also the section of her diary which is most enhanced by its historical setting. And finally, although it is perhaps unrepresentative of the *Ukyō no Daibu Shū* in that it is one of the longest thematically cohesive sections in the entire work, precisely for this reason it lends itself very well to excerption as a unit.

The translation is based on the text edited by Hisamatsu Sen'ichi and others which appears in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi *et al.*, ed., *Heian Kamakura Shikashū*.⁵³ This text, in turn, is based on the Kyushu University Library manuscript and is collated with the manuscript held by the Imperial Household Library⁵⁴ and with the *Gunsho Ruijū* text.⁵⁵ In addition, Hisamatsu and his collaborators had

⁵¹ Shimamura Izuru 新村出, 'Seiya Sambu no Josei Kajin' 星夜讚美の女性歌人, in *Namban Sarasa* 南蠻更紗 (*Shimamura Izuru Zenshū*, v), Chikuma Shobō, 1971, p. 383.

⁵² Tomikura, p. 139.

⁵³ For full reference, see n. 14 above.

⁵⁴ *Kunaichō Shoryōbu* 宮内庁書陵部

⁵⁵ A concise description of the textual history and the various extant manuscripts of the *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū* may be found in Tomikura, pp. 113-30. For the most thorough treatment of textual matters published to date, see Ikari Masashi 井狩正司, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū :Kōhon oyobi Sōsakuin* 建礼門院右京

reference to the Shōkōkan and Seikadō⁵⁶ manuscripts.

In preparing this translation, I have also relied heavily on the commentaries of Hon'iden Shigeyoshi,⁵⁷ which is based on the *Gunsho Ruijū* text, and of Murai Jun, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū Hyōkai*,⁵⁸ which utilizes the Kyushu University Library manuscript text, along with emendations from other unspecified sources.

大夫集：校本及び総索引，Kasama Shoin 笠間書院，1969.

⁵⁶ 彰考館，靜嘉堂

⁵⁷ See n. 2.

⁵⁸ See n. 26.

Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū

EVERYTHING about the turmoil during the Juei and Genryaku periods⁵⁹ was so horrible that though I may call it a nightmare, a chimera, a disaster, or anything else, still I find that no single word can possibly express it. Thus, I have difficulty recalling exactly what took place, and even now there are certain things I would rather not remember. No matter how it is described, no matter how much one ponders it, neither words nor emotions can encompass the enormity of the events of that autumn—that terrible autumn when I heard that all my friends were to leave the Capital.⁶⁰ None of us had known when it might take place, and so when faced with the actual event, everyone, both those who witnessed it and those who merely heard about it from afar, was thrown into such confusion that it seemed we were living some unspeakable nightmare. I kept hearing about uprisings throughout the country and was filled with apprehension as to what might become of us.

At this time Sukemori⁶¹ was serving as a First Secretary in the Emperor's Private Office⁶² and seemed to find it difficult to slip away from his official duties. Those around me repeated over and again how hopeless and, indeed, scandalous our relationship was,⁶³ and Sukemori, too, treated the affair with a great deal more caution than before. Yet we managed, though with a good deal of hesitation, to meet from time to time.

⁵⁹ The Juei 壽永 period began in the fifth month of 1182 and, if one were an adherent of the Taira cause, ended with the death of Emperor Antoku at Dannoura in the third month of 1185. However, according to the official chronology, the *nengō* was changed to Genryaku 元暦 in the fourth month of 1184, after the accession of Emperor Go-Toba, and ended in the eighth month of the following year. These two periods span the final struggle between the Heike and the Genji that ended the Taira hegemony and led to the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate.

⁶⁰ The Taira were forced to flee the Capital before the advancing armies of Kiso no Yoshinaka; the Heike decamped on the 25th of the seventh month, 1183, and Yoshinaka occupied

the city three days later.

⁶¹ The second son of Taira no Shigemori 平重盛 and the younger brother of Taira no Koremori 平維盛, Sukemori was the greatest love of Ukyō no Daibu's life. He played an unimpressive part in the campaigns against the Minamoto and was drowned at Dannoura.

⁶² Sukemori was one of the two First Secretaries (*kurōdo no tō* 藏人頭) who headed the *kurōdodokoro* 藏人所, the bureau handling the personal affairs of the emperor. He was appointed to this office in 1183 and simultaneously promoted to junior third rank. At this time Sukemori was about 25 years old, the author about 26.

⁶³ An allusion to the difficulties caused by the existence of Sukemori's principal consort.

'These disturbances have now reached such a point,' he would tell me when we met, 'that there can be no doubt that I will soon be dead. Will you not pity me then, even a little? You may not love me at all, but at least we have become used to talking freely with one another. In view of all that has passed between us, I hope you will pray that I may find light on the dark path which lies before me. Though I may manage to survive for a while, I must surely die in the end. I am firmly resolved not to think of myself as the person I used to be. If I begin to allow myself real emotions, or regrets over times now past, or longings for a certain person, then there would be no end to it. I cannot be sure of what my weak spirit will drive me to do, in spite of my resolve.'

'And so', he continued, 'I have renounced all worldly attachments. I have decided not even to permit myself the indulgence of sending messages from this or that distant shore, so do not think that I am treating you shabbily just because I do not ask after you. I am determined from now on to think of myself as one whose condition has changed utterly. Still, my true feelings will probably reassert themselves in the end. How regrettable that would be!'

When I had heard him out, I knew he was right, yet how was I to answer him? I could only respond with tears.

At the beginning of autumn, I heard that at length the flight from the Capital—that dream within a dream—was at last to take place. To what can I possibly compare the emotions I experienced? Of course, no person of true feeling failed to discuss or contemplate these sorrowful events, but for me there was not a single friend to whom I felt I could express my innermost thoughts. Unable to open my heart to anyone, I spent my days in melancholy brooding. When my welling emotions became more than I could bear, I would turn to the Buddha. There was nothing for me to do but to spend my days weeping.

Each of us is allotted a certain number of years in this world. We cannot end our lives when we might wish. But being unable to flee by myself to some temple, I was even thwarted in my desire to enter holy orders. How bitterly it pained me that I should be forced to go on living as I was.

204	<i>Mata tameshi</i>	I know of no example
	<i>Tagui mo shiranu</i>	Nor like event which can match
	<i>Uki koto o</i>	The miseries I have seen.
	<i>Mite mo sate aru</i>	What a wretched fate is mine
	<i>Mi zo utomashiki</i>	That I must still go on living!

As autumn wore on, my fears multiplied. Now, in the saddest of all seasons, I felt even less able to bear this life any longer.

One bright moonlit evening, I gazed at the sky, brooding upon the shapes of the clouds and the sad sighing of the wind. Under a traveler's sky, journeying toward some unknown destination, how might Sukemori feel, I wondered, and was overcome with tears.

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| 205 | <i>Izuku nite</i>
<i>Ikanaru koto o</i>
<i>Omoitsutsu</i>
<i>Koyoi no tsuki ni</i>
<i>Sode shiboruran</i> ⁶⁴ | Where is he?
And what kinds of thoughts
Fill his mind
As beneath the moon this night
He wets his sleeves with tears? |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Even at dawn and at dusk, no matter what distractions there were, how could my mind possibly stray from these musings? I wanted so much to speak with him one last time. How unhappy I was when I could not. The rumors I heard of him as he wandered from place to place were too terrible for words.

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| 206 | <i>Iwaba ya to</i>
<i>Omou koto nomi</i>
<i>Ōkaru mo</i>
<i>Sate munashiku ya</i>
<i>Tsui ni hatenan</i> | If we could but meet,
How very many are those things
I wish to say to him.
Am I thus to end my days,
These longings unfulfilled? |
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I heard that fearsome warriors were leaving the Capital in great numbers.⁶⁵ What terrible news will I hear next, I wondered. When will the next shock come? While I lay weeping bitterly, troubled by these fears, Sukemori appeared to me in a dream. He was wearing informal court dress, just as I had always seen him. The wind blew fiercely about him, and he gazed off into the distance, seemingly lost in thought. I was so distraught that I immediately awoke, and my feelings then were quite indescribable. I wondered if he might be at that moment exactly as I had envisioned him.

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| 207 | <i>Nami kaze no</i>
<i>Araki sawagi ni</i>
<i>Tadayoite</i>
<i>Sa koso wa yasuki</i>
<i>Sora nakarurame</i> ⁶⁶ | He drifts about
Battered by the wild tumult
Of wind and waves:
Surely he can no longer enjoy
Even a single untroubled hour. |
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Perhaps because I became so agitated with these many fears, I fell ill with a fever for a few days. I felt so wretched that I wished that I might die.

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| 208 | <i>Uki ue no</i>
<i>Nao uki koto o</i>
<i>Kikanu saki ni</i>
<i>Kono yo no hoka ni</i>
<i>Nari mo shinaba ya</i> | Before again I hear
Of still greater wretchedness
To add to that I know,
Would that I might leave behind
This world and all its misery. |
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⁶⁴ *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2485 (xviii: *zō no uta*, 5).

⁶⁵ Presumably the members of Minamoto no Yoshitsune's 源義經 army. After eliminating Kiso no Yoshinaka, Yoshitsune occupied the Capital in the first month of 1184, and soon

after proceeded westward in pursuit of the Taira.

⁶⁶ 'Nami' and 'kaze' are *engo* 縁語, or association words, as also are 'kaze' and 'sora'.

But that was not to be. How cruel my fate is, I thought, and felt utterly miserable.

209	<i>Ararubeki</i>	I have no desire
	<i>Kokochi mo senu ni</i>	To continue longer in this world,
	<i>Nao kiede</i>	Yet I do not die.
	<i>Kyō made furu zo</i>	How wretched I feel, how sad
	<i>Kanashikarikeru</i>	To have survived another day.

In the spring of the following year,⁶⁷ a relative suggested that we go on a pilgrimage together. I was then so unhappy that it seemed too great an effort to do anything, but since the journey had a religious purpose, I roused myself from my gloomy thoughts and went with her. She told me that on the road back there was a certain place where the plum blossoms were unusually beautiful. When we arrived, she went right in, and I trailed along after her. And indeed, the blossoms there were far lovelier than those one usually sees.

I overheard my companion talking with the owner, a hermit priest.

'Every year,' the priest said, 'a certain gentleman used to come here. He would rope off the whole area so that he could enjoy the blossoms undisturbed. What a pity that he has not come this year! The flowers have bloomed and fallen for nothing.'

My relative evidently asked who the gentleman was, for I distinctly heard the priest answer 'Sukemori'. At this all my longings and anxieties welled up in confusion within me.

210	<i>Omou koto</i>	All my thoughts,
	<i>Kokoro no mama ni</i>	Everything that is in my heart,
	<i>Katarawan</i>	I will tell them,
	<i>Narekeru hito o</i>	If these blossoms also grieve
	<i>Hana mo shinobaba</i>	For the one I loved so well.

That spring I heard many rumors which shocked and frightened me, but when I learned that great numbers of my closest friends had been killed and were being subjected to the most unimaginable treatment, I was horrified and could think of nothing to say.⁶⁸ And the things people said about them were unlike anything I had ever heard before.

211	<i>Aware sareba</i>	Alas! I wonder
	<i>Kore wa makoto ka</i>	Can this be reality?
	<i>Nao mo tada</i>	Or is it but
	<i>Yume ni ya aran</i>	Some frightful dream
	<i>To koso oboyure</i>	From which I will awake?

⁶⁷ 1184.

⁶⁸ After the Taira defeat at Ichinotani on the 7th of the second month, 1184, the prisoners

and heads of the slain were brought back to the Capital and exhibited in the streets.

I heard of Middle Commander Shigehira's wretched plight, and that he was shortly to be brought up to the Capital.⁶⁹ Among all those I had known at Court, I had been especially close to Shigehira. He used to say such charming things, and even in the most trivial matters, he was always solicitous of others' feelings. He was truly a rare and wonderful person. What could have happened in a previous life to merit such a fate as this? Those who saw him said that his face remained unchanged, and they could not bear to look at him. How painful it was to hear this, how unspeakably sad.

212	<i>Asa yū ni</i> <i>Minaresugushishi</i> <i>Sono mukashi</i> <i>Kakarubeshi to wa</i> <i>Omoite mo mizu</i>	Long ago, When we used to see each other Morning and night, Never, never did it occur to me That he would come to this!
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Again and again I imagined what he must have been thinking.

213	<i>Mada shinanu</i> <i>Kono yo no uchi ni</i> <i>Mi o kaete</i> <i>Nanigokochi shite</i> <i>Akecurasuran</i>	Though not yet dead, He has suffered a dreadful change. In this sad world, What feelings must be his As he passes the wretched days.
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Everyone was deeply grieved to hear that Middle Commander Koremori had drowned himself at Kumano.⁷⁰ It has always seemed that the Taira were far superior to people one meets nowadays, but Koremori was especially attractive, both in natural features and tasteful attire. Among all the gentlemen I have ever known, there is not one who can be likened to him. Thus, whenever he appeared in public, who could help but praise him?

At His Majesty's⁷¹ birthday celebration at the Hōjūji Palace,⁷² when Koremori performed the Dance of the Blue Waves,⁷³ people remarked how much he called to mind the fabulous Genji.⁷⁴ I overheard others say that Koremori's beauty

⁶⁹ 平重衡, 1157-85, son of Kiyomori. He was captured at Ichinotani, and after being paraded around the Capital, he was sent to Kamakura. After the final destruction of the Heike armies, he was turned over to the priests of Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji, which he had burned down in 1180, and was decapitated.

⁷⁰ Eldest son of Taira no Shigemori. It is not clear what became of him after Ichinotani. According to legend, he ended up taking holy orders on Mt Kōya and drowned himself at Kumano in 1184; according to other accounts, he only made it appear that he had committed suicide, and he spent the rest of his life in hiding near Kumano.

⁷¹ Cloistered Emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河

法皇, r. 1155-8. On his abdication, he took control of the cloister government (*insei* 院政) and remained in control until his death in 1192.

⁷² 法住寺殿, Go-Shirakawa's main residence in what is now Higashiyama-ku in Kyoto. His fiftieth birthday celebration was held 4th-6th of the third month, 1176.

⁷³ *Seikaiha* (now pronounced *seigaiha*) 青海波, one of the most famous *gagaku* 雅樂 dances; Koremori performed at a banquet on the 6th.

⁷⁴ An allusion to the 'Momiji no Ga' chapter of *Genji Monogatari*, in which Genji and Tō no Chūjō perform the *seigaiha* with great success.

must surely 'eclipse the cherry blossoms themselves.'⁷⁵ Of course, no one could forget his appearance at that time, but I knew him so well that, although distressed by the deaths of so many of my old friends, I felt his loss especially keenly.

He used to tell me, 'You should think of me exactly as you think of Sukemori.' When I assured him that I did, he would reply, 'That's what you always say, but I wonder.' These and other memories caused me indescribable sadness.

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| 214 | <i>Haru no hana no</i>
<i>Iro ni yosoeshi</i>
<i>Omokage no</i>
<i>Munashiki nami no</i>
<i>Shita ni kuchinuru</i> | His face and form,
Whose beauty was once compared
To springtime blossoms,
Now ebb away to no avail
Beneath the empty waves. ⁷⁶ |
| 215 | <i>Kanashiku mo</i>
<i>Kakaru uki me o</i>
<i>Mi Kumano no</i>
<i>Urawa no nami ni</i>
<i>Mi o shizumekeru</i> ⁷⁷ | How wretched,
How sad the fate that he has met!
Beneath the waves
Of the sea by Holy Kumano
He has cast himself forever. |

I was grieved to hear about Koremori, but my concern was especially deep for his brother Sukemori. His situation had been unbearable from the outset, but when I heard it noised about that Koremori and Middle Commander Kiyotsune⁷⁸ had each died by his own hand, I could well imagine how abandoned Sukemori must have felt. I thought of him constantly, but because of his resolve not to write (or perhaps for some other reason), he sent me not a single word. There was only this brief message which I received in the winter of the year he left the Capital. 'As I have told you, I now consider myself a transformed being. I hope that everyone will think of me in this way also. Please pray for my salvation in the next world.' This was all he wrote.

I knew of no one to whom I could entrust a letter and was in no position to send a messenger myself. I worried about him constantly, but there was no way I could convey my thoughts to him. About the time I learned what had become of his brothers, I happened upon a trustworthy person who would be sure to deliver my message to him. In my letter I told Sukemori that I had not planned to write to him in this way, but was loath to let the chance slip by, and I added many other things as well.

⁷⁵ An allusion to a passage in the 'Hana no En' chapter of *Genji Monogatari*: 'Genji's appearance eclipsed the cherry blossoms and actually dampened one's appreciation of their beauty.'

⁷⁶ Koremori is said to have been called *Ōbai Shōshō* 櫻梅少將, 'Cherry and Plum Blossom Commander'.

⁷⁷ *Fūgashū*, no. 1996 (xvii: *zō no uta*, 3). 'Mi' functions as a *kakekotoba* 掛詞, or pivot word, with the meanings 'to see, meet' and 'holy'.

⁷⁸ 平清經, d. 1183, third son of Shigemori. He drowned himself at Yanagiura in Buzen in the tenth month of 1183.

- 216 *Samazama ni*
Kokoro midarete
Moshiogusa
Kakiatsumubeki
*Kokochi dani sezu*⁷⁹
 This way and that
 My heart is buffeted about,
 So surely I will fail
 To gather up, like salt seaweed,
 The tangled strands of my thoughts.
- 217 *Onaji yo to*
Nao omou koso
Kanashikere
Aru ga aru ni mo
*Aranu kono yo ni*⁸⁰
 How sad it is
 To think that the present world
 Is the same one as before,
 This world where I still live on,
 Though it holds no place for me.

I also spoke of his brothers.

- 218 *Omou koto o*
Omoiyaru ni zo
Omoikudaku
Omoi ni soete
Itodo kanashiki
 When I think
 Of this, your latest sorrow,
 These fresh anxieties
 Are added to my store of woes
 And plunge me in yet deeper grief.⁸¹

In his reply Sukemori said that, despite his resolve, he was pleased to receive my letter. 'I do not know whether death will come today or tomorrow,' he wrote, 'and so I have utterly given up thoughts of this world. I shall only open my heart to you this once.'

- 219 *Omoitojime*
Omoikirite mo
Tachikaeri
Sasuga ni omou
Koto zo ōkaru
 I have shut off my thoughts
 And cut myself off from the past,
 Yet again and again
 My many longings and memories
 Keep flooding back, after all.
- 220 *Ima wa subete*
Nani no nasake mo
Aware o mo
Mi mo seji kiki mo
Seji to koso omoe
 I am resolved:
 No more will I bend my ear
 To words of compassion,
 No more will I take notice
 Of the love others hold for me.

He spoke of those who had preceded him in death.

⁷⁹ 'Moshiogusa' is a *makurakotoba* 枕詞, or 'pillow word', for 'kakiatsumu', which means both 'to rake up' and 'to collect and write down'. 'Midare', 'moshiogusa', and 'kaki' are *engo*.

⁸⁰ *Fūgashū*, no. 1997 (xvii: *zō no uta*, 3), where the last line appears as 'Aranu kono yo o'.

⁸¹ The charm of this poem obviously lies

in the repetition of the words derived from *omou*, 'to think'. The effect can be imitated in English translation, though with dubious success: When I think/Of your sorrowful thoughts,/My own fearful thoughts/Are added to my store of thoughts,/And I am all the more despondent.

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| 221 | <i>Aru hodo ga</i>
<i>Aru ni mo aranu</i>
<i>Uchi ni nao</i>
<i>Kaku uki koto o</i>
<i>Miru zo kanashiki</i> ⁸² | While to this world,
Though it holds no place for me,
I am held fast,
How sad is the fate I suffer
That such misery should be mine. |
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I cannot even begin to describe the emotions I experienced on reading this.

In the spring of the following year, I heard at last that Sukemori was no longer of this world.⁸³ How can I possibly express the depths of my despair? I knew it would end this way, yet when it actually happened, I was left dazed. My tears welled up so fast that I could not hold them back. I was distressed that those around me should see my grief. I do not know what people thought of me, but I told them I did not feel well and spent the day lying down. I drew the bedclothes over my head and let the tears come as they would. I tried every way possible to put him out of my mind, but perversely, his image hovered before me. I felt as if I could hear every word he had ever spoken. In so many ways did my grief torment me that I could never recount them all. Even when I hear that someone has reached the end of his normal span and has passed away, I find it sad. To what, I wondered over and over again, could I possibly compare this sorrow?

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| 222 | <i>Nabete yo no</i>
<i>Hakanaki koto o</i>
<i>Kanashi to wa</i>
<i>Kakaru yume minu</i>
<i>Hito ya iiken</i> | People who speak
Of just ordinary bereavements
As pitiable,
Can they ever have known
Such nightmares as this? |
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Some time later I received a letter from a certain person, who wrote, 'How terrible it must be for you,' but I sensed that it was merely a routine, conventional inquiry.

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| 223 | <i>Kanashi to mo</i>
<i>Mata aware to mo</i>
<i>Yo no tsune ni</i>
<i>Iubeki koto ni</i>
<i>Araba koso arame</i> | If it were merely 'sad',
Or were it merely 'touching',
If it were something
To be spoken of in an ordinary way,
Only then could I endure this. ⁸⁴ |
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⁸² *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2331 (xvi: *zō no uta*, 4).

⁸³ Although there are other theories, it seems most likely that Sukemori drowned himself at Dannoura on the 24th of the third month, 1185.

⁸⁴ In order to keep the translation to a reasonable length, I have omitted poems nos. 224-9 and their prose contexts. In the headnote

to the first three of these poems, Ukyō no Daibu elaborates on her grief, sense of loss, and the difficulty of forgetting about the past. The prose context to poems nos. 227-9 describes some of her religious activities to aid in Sukemori's salvation, including copying out sutras, having Buddhist spells written, etc.

The apartments where I was living that summer looked down into a valley. One day at the height of the season, the doors were open and I sat gazing outside. The leaves of the bamboo appeared to have shriveled in the fierce sunlight. Would such heat, which seemed to 'split the very earth', not even dry my sleeves, I wondered,⁸⁵ and found myself again choked with tears. The shrilling of the cicadas in the treetops was loud enough to be almost irritating, but since they, too, spent their days crying aloud, I felt a kinship with them.

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| 230 | <i>Koto towan</i>
<i>Nare mo ya mono o</i>
<i>Omouran</i>
<i>Morotomo ni naku</i>
<i>Natsu no higurashi</i> ⁸⁶ | O summer cicadas,
Whose keening mingles with mine,
Let me ask you:
Do you too grieve for someone
That we should weep all day together? |
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With no distractions from sorrow, I spent the time absorbed in prayer. Ever since childhood, I had faith in the Buddha, but so many things had occurred to convince me of the wretchedness of my destiny and I had suffered such grief that I began to ask why this must be so, and even grew resentful of the gods and Buddhas.

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| 231 | <i>Saritomo to</i>
<i>Tanomu hotoke mo</i>
<i>Megumaneba</i>
<i>Ato no yo made o</i>
<i>Omou kanashisa</i> | Despite my woes,
I placed my trust in Buddha's grace,
But without his blessings,
How sad to think in the world to come
My fate must also be in doubt! |
| 232 | <i>Yukue naku</i>
<i>Waga mi mo saraba</i>
<i>Akugaren</i>
<i>Ato todomubeki</i>
<i>Uki yo naranu ni</i> ⁸⁷ | Without direction,
My body too will wander forth,
Following my heart.
This wretched world no longer holds
The memories which could keep me here. |

Sukumori had owned some land in the Northern Mountains⁸⁸ that was endowed with a certain air of elegance and dignity. He was forever going there to see the cherry blossoms and the beauty of the autumn fields, and everyone had been there at one time or another.

I heard that a certain priest was now the owner. Since he was a distant relative of mine, I went there in secret to search for some small reminder of the past.

⁸⁵ An allusion to *Man'yōshū*, no. 1995, anonymous: In the sixth month/The very earth itself splits open/Beneath the blazing sun./Will my sleeves never be dry,/Now that you come to me no more?

⁸⁶ 'Higurashi' is used here to mean both 'summer cicada' and 'all day long'.

⁸⁷ *Shinsenzaishū*, no 1888 (xvii: zō no uta, 2),

where the following text is given: *Iza saraba/Yukue mo shirazu/Akugaren/Ato todomureba/Kanashikarikeri*. Well then, so be it:/Knowing not where I shall go,/Yet will I wander forth./How melancholy I would feel/Were I to stop here longer.

⁸⁸ Kitayama きた山, a general name for the mountains north of Kyoto.

Along the way I thought I saw Sukemori's image going on ahead, and once again I was blinded with tears. How terrible it was.

The grounds of Sukemori's estate had been laid out with great care, but now they had become a plain of reeds, a 'rank thicket of mugwort'.⁸⁹ Overgrown with moss and creepers, they retained no trace of their former splendor. The bush clover he had planted had grown quite wild and lay about the northern and southern gardens in tangled disorder. The violet weed⁹⁰ gave off a faint fragrance, and 'the single clump of plume grass' seemed indeed to have become 'an autumn field thick with the cries of insects.'⁹¹

I had my carriage drawn up to the veranda and alighted by the doors. As I gazed about, all alone, a host of memories came back to me, but to speak of them would only reawaken my grief. I was so distraught that, as usual, I became nearly insensible to my surroundings.

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| 233 | <i>Tsuyu kieshi</i>
<i>Ato wa nohara to</i>
<i>Narihatete</i>
<i>Arishi ni mo nizu</i>
<i>Arehatenikeri</i> ⁹² | Like the dew
He has vanished, leaving this garden
To fall to ruin.
Now become like a wild heath,
It bears no trace of its former beauty. |
| 234 | <i>Ato o dani</i>
<i>Katami ni min to</i>
<i>Omoishi o</i>
<i>Sate shi mo itodo</i>
<i>Kanashisa zo sou</i> | Among these ruins
Some small reminder of the past
Was all I sought,
Yet I find that in the end
I only increased my heartache. |

In the eastern garden a number of willow and cherry trees, all of the same height, had been planted together. One spring long ago, the two of us had looked at them, and now it seemed as if that time had returned once again. How painful it was to think that only the trees were as before.

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| 235 | <i>Uete mishi</i>
<i>Hito wa karenuru</i>
<i>Ato ni nao</i>
<i>Nokoru kozue o</i>
<i>Miru mo tsuyukeshi</i> ⁹³ | Of him who planted them,
All trace has withered and gone.
Yet among the ruins
I see the trees that still remain,
And my tears fall like the dew. |
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⁸⁹ *Yomogi ga sama*; perhaps an allusion to a poem by Sone no Yoshitada 曾禰好忠 in *Goshūishū*, no. 273 (iv: *aki no uta*, 1): Sing, sing on, / O cricket hidden in the mugwort, / Grown rank and wild, / The autumn now slowly fading / Is indeed so very sad.

⁹⁰ *Fujibakama* ふぢばかま, also known as thoroughwort, eupatorium, hemp agrimony, and boneset.

⁹¹ An allusion to a poem by Miharu no

Arisuke 御春有輔 in *Kokinshū*, no. 853 (xvi: *aishō no uta*): In this garden / The single clump of plume grass / That you planted / Has now become an autumn field / Thick with the cries of insects.

⁹² 'Tsuyu' and 'nohara' are *engo*.

⁹³ 'Karenuru' is a *kakekotoba* meaning 'departed, gone away' and 'withered'. 'Kare', 'kozue', and 'tsuyu' are *engo*.

- 236 *Waga mi moshi* If by chance
Haru made araba I should survive until spring,
Tazune min I will come again.
Hana mo sono yo no O blossoms, you too must not forget
Koto na wasure so The way life was while yet he lived.

Another time, on my way somewhere, I happened to pass Sukemori's mansion. It had, of course, gone up in smoke long ago,⁹⁴ and only the foundation stones remained. The grasses had grown deep, and here and there autumn flowers were blooming. The dew spilled from the leaves, and I could hear the mingled cries of the insects. The sadness of their voices impressed me deeply. Feeling that I could not pass by, I stopped my carriage for a while. When, I wondered, will this longing cease?

- 237 *Mata sara ni* Once again I return
Uki furusato o To gaze on this unhappy spot
Kaerimite That I knew so well.
Kokoro todomuru How futile, how pointless it is
Koto mo hakanashi That my heart would linger here.

Over and over these same thoughts passed through my head, leaving me not a moment's respite. My life dragged on endlessly, and again and again I heard of misery piled upon further miseries such as I cannot describe.

- 238 *Sadamenaki* In this world, they say,
Yo to wa iedomo Nothing is certain, nothing permanent,
Kaku bakari And yet I think
Uki tameshi koso Surely there can be no other
Mata nakarikere Who has suffered as I have.

I heard that the former Empress⁹⁵ had gone to Ōhara, but nothing further. Without the assistance of the right people, there was no way of going to visit her. Yet, not really knowing what I was doing, I set off for Ōhara, my deep devotion to Her Highness as my guide.

As we proceeded into the mountains, our path made me feel so sad that my

⁹⁴ Before fleeing the Capital in the seventh month of 1183, the Taira set fire to all their residences.

⁹⁵ Kenreimon'in, 1155–1213, or Taira no Tokushi, daughter of Kiyomori. She was named Imperial Consort to Emperor Takakura in 1178 and gave birth to the future Emperor Antoku in the same year; she was given the name Kenreimon'in in 1181. Two years later she fled the Capital with the Taira and

Emperor Antoku; she tried to drown herself at Dannoura but was unceremoniously fished out of the water by Minamoto warriors. She was sent back to the Capital in the fourth month of 1185 and took holy orders in the following month. Later that year she moved to Jakkōin 寂光院 nunnery in Ōhara, in present-day Sakyo-ku of Kyoto, where she spent her remaining years.

tears preceded me. Upon reaching her hermitage, I found that the state of misery in which she lived, her dwelling and its furnishings, were all such as I could not bear to look upon. How could anyone, even one who had never seen her in the past, think that this sort of life was conceivable for one of her station? Whether this was reality or only a dream, for someone such as myself who had served Her Highness, it was too terrible to describe.

The late autumn gale down from the mountains echoed in the branches of the nearby trees. The whispers of the water in the bamboo pipe, the call of the deer, the cries of the insects everywhere sound the same, but here they filled me with a sadness I had never before experienced.

In the days of her youth, the Empress had been served by sixty and more ladies-in-waiting, dressed in layer upon layer of robes cut from brocades as beautiful as spring in the Capital.⁹⁶ Here only three or four women, clad in inky black, attended to her needs. And so changed were they that I did not even recognize them. As we looked at each other, we could only murmur, 'Alas, alas.' Choked with tears, we could say no more.

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| 239 | <i>Ima ya yume</i>
<i>Mukashi ya yume to</i>
<i>Mayowarete</i>
<i>Ika ni omoedo</i>
<i>Utsutsu to zo naki</i> ⁹⁷ | Is this a dream?
Or is it that the past was a dream?
I am at a loss to say.
But no matter how I consider it,
I cannot believe this is reality. |
| 240 | <i>Aogimishi</i>
<i>Mukashi no kumo no</i>
<i>Ue no tsuki</i>
<i>Kakaru miyama no</i>
<i>Kage zo kanashiki</i> ⁹⁸ | Long, long ago,
I gazed with awe at the moon
Riding above the clouds.
Now resting on this remote mountain,
Her radiance is touched with sadness. |

Though she was likened then to the beauty of the cherry blossoms or again to the brilliance of the moon, still these words did not seem adequate. Now she looked like some other person entirely.

Since the Capital held nothing to draw my thoughts, I wondered why I was going back at all. To leave her struck me as disagreeable and somewhat unfeeling.

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| 241 | <i>Yama fukaku</i>
<i>Todome okitsuru</i>
<i>Waga kokoro</i>
<i>Yagate sumubeki</i>
<i>Shirube to o nare</i> ⁹⁹ | O my heart,
I leave you still at her side,
Deep within the mountains.
Be my guide to a purer life,
That soon I may live with her. |
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⁹⁶ An allusion to a poem by the priest Sosei 素性 in *Kokinshū*, no. 56 (1: *haru no uta*, 1): I look about me:/The willows and the cherry trees/ Are mingled together,/And truly the Capital seems/ The brocade of springtime.

⁹⁷ *Fūgashū*, no. 1905 (xviii: *zō no uta*, 3).

⁹⁸ 'Kakaru' is a *kakokotoba* meaning 'such' and 'to hang, to rest'. 'Aogimishi', 'kaku', 'kage', and 'tsuki' are all *engo*.

⁹⁹ 'Sumu' here means both 'to become clear, to purify' and 'to live'.

Everything made me wish that I were no longer part of this world.

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| 242 | <i>Nagekiwabi</i>
<i>Waga nakaramashi to</i>
<i>Omou made no</i>
<i>Mi zo warenagara</i>
<i>Kanashikarikeru</i> | I lament and grieve
And even wish that I might end
My sojourn in this world:
I cannot but think my fate is sad
That I have been brought to this. |
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I wondered how I could ever distract myself from my sorrow, and so while visiting somewhere for the first time, it occurred to me to go away on a journey. Yet as soon as I thought of leaving the Capital, memories came flooding back.

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| 243 | <i>Kaerubeki</i>
<i>Michi wa kokoro ni</i>
<i>Makasete mo</i>
<i>Tabidatsu hodo wa</i>
<i>Nao aware nari</i> | The road of my return
Lies ever open before me,
To follow at my will.
Yet the beginning of a journey
Is always profoundly moving. |
| 244 | <i>Miyako oba</i>
<i>Itoite mo mata</i>
<i>Nagori aru o</i>
<i>Mashite to mono o</i>
<i>Omoiidetsuru</i> | I detest the Capital,
And yet somehow I must feel regret
On parting from it.
I remember one reluctant to leave:
How much greater was his sorrow. |

My destination was near Sakamoto on Mt Hiei. The falling snow darkened the sky and made me feel as if I were far, far away, quite cut off from the Capital. What sort of memories was I looking for, I wondered forlornly, to have come to such a place as this?

Late that night, a flock of geese flew over my lodging place. Their melancholy cries moved me deeply, and I found myself in tears.

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| 245 | <i>Uki koto wa</i>
<i>Tokorogara ka to</i>
<i>Nogaruredo</i>
<i>Izuku mo kari no</i>
<i>Yado to kikoyuru</i> ¹⁰⁰ | I fled my old haunts,
Thinking a change would heal my
misery,
Yet the cries of the geese
Remind me that wherever I may go
I will find but a fugitive dwelling. |
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I had passed only a single barrier¹⁰¹ and thus had not come far, yet the gale echoing through the trees was far wilder than that in the Capital.

¹⁰⁰ 'Kari' here means both 'geese' and 'fugitive, transient'.

¹⁰¹ The famous Ōsaka Barrier, located south of present-day Ōtsu in Shiga.

- 246 *Seki koete*
Iku kumoi made
Hedatenedo
Miyako ni wa ninu
Yamaoroshi kana
- Passing the Barrier,
 No great stretches of cloud-banked
 sky
 Separate me from home.
 Yet how unlike those in the Capital,
 The stormy winds down from the
 mountain!

With great care I performed the rites and prayed with all my heart that the one I had loved might find peace in the next world. Yet, as ever, useless regrets welled up within me. I tried to put them out of my mind, but how could I help it?

I arose and went to look outside. There stood an orange tree, heavily laden with snow, reminding me of an incident at the Palace. When could it have been?

One morning after a heavy fall of snow, I saw him dressed in a court robe, now somewhat limp, as though he had been on night duty. He broke off a snow-covered spray from an orange tree and brought it to me. When I asked him why he had chosen a spray from that particular tree, he replied, 'The orange tree stands in a quarter which I frequent a great deal, and there is a tie of affection between us.'¹⁰²

I remembered it as clearly as if it were happening at that very moment, and my sorrow was such as words cannot describe.

- 247 *Tachinareshi*
Mikaki no uchi no
Tachibana mo
Yuki to kienishi
Hito ya kouran
- He knew it well,
 The orange tree within the Palace
 walls.
 Could it be
 That it, too, longs for him,
 Who vanished like melting snow?

Such was my poem, as I thought of that tree of old. The leaves of the tree I was actually looking at grew in profusion, but their color spoke of sadness.

- 248 *Koto towan*
Satsuki narade mo
Tachibana ni
Mukashi no sode no
Ka wa nokoru ya to
- Let me ask you:
 Though it is not the rainy month,
 Among the orange flowers
 Does the fragrance still linger
 Of those sleeves of long ago?¹⁰³

¹⁰² On the south side of the Ceremonial Hall of the Imperial Palace were planted two trees: a cherry to the east (left) and an orange tree to the west (right), the latter tree being known as the Orange Tree of the Right Division (*ukon no tachibana* 右近の橘). Sukemori was appointed a Provisional Middle Commander of the Right Division of the Inner

Palace Guards, hence the bond of affection between him and orange trees in general.

¹⁰³ This poem alludes throughout to *Kokin-shū*, no. 139 (III: *natsu no uta*): Orange blossoms/ Awaiting the rainy month to bloom:/In their fragrance/I breathe the scent of the sleeves/ That belonged to one of long ago.

When the wind blew, I heard the sound of the bird clapper, and this, too, was somehow sad.

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| 249 | <i>Arishi yo ni</i>
<i>Arazu naruko no</i>
<i>Oto kikeba</i>
<i>Suginishi koto zo</i>
<i>Itodo kanashiki</i> ¹⁰⁴ | The world of old
Will never come again, they say:
Yet the clapper's sound
Makes those events long passed
Grow all the more affecting. |
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Gazing far away into the distance, I became aware of the great expanse of sky separating me from the Capital.

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| 250 | <i>Waga kokoro</i>
<i>Ukitaru mama ni</i>
<i>Nagamureba</i>
<i>Izuku o kumo no</i>
<i>Hate to shi mo nashi</i> | Lost in thought,
My spirit floating aimlessly,
I gaze at the sky.
In all directions, without end,
The clouds stretch on and on. |
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It was a day sometime around the beginning of the twelfth month. After nightfall, something neither quite snow nor rain fell from time to time. The scudding clouds roiled and twisted. The sky remained only partly overcast, and here and there groups of stars now shone, now disappeared. I lay down and pulled a coverlet over my head. Late that night, I imagine it must have been about the second quarter of the Hour of the Ox,¹⁰⁵ I thrust the coverlet aside and looked up at the sky. It had grown unusually clear and had taken on a soft blue color. Large stars of particular brilliance appeared across the whole expanse of sky. It was uncommonly beautiful. It looked like pale indigo paper, lightly scattered with bits of foil. I felt as though tonight I was looking at the sky for the first time. I had often seen starlit skies so bright that the moon appeared to be shining, but that night, perhaps because of the particular time and place, seemed somehow different, and I became lost in thought.

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| 251 | <i>Tsuki o koso</i>
<i>Nagamenareshika</i>
<i>Hoshi no yo no</i>
<i>Fukaki aware o</i>
<i>Koyoi shirinuru</i> ¹⁰⁶ | It is upon the moon
That so often I have gazed
enraptured,
But tonight
I have come to understand at last
The profound beauty of a starlit sky. |
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When I was on my way to the shrine at Hiyoshi,¹⁰⁷ the snow fell so heavily

¹⁰⁴ 'Naruko' is a *kakekotoba* which, as well as meaning 'bird clapper', contains the attributive of the copula *naru*.

¹⁰⁵ 1.30–2.00 A.M.

¹⁰⁶ *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2151 (xvt: *zō no uta*, 3).

¹⁰⁷ Hie Shrine, popularly known as Sannō and located in Ōtsu in Shiga.

that it darkened the sky, and a great deal of it piled up on the front rail of my palanquin. I spent all night at my devotions and returned to my lodgings at dawn. On the way back, when I raised the blind, the snow flew inside, getting into my sleeves and collar. I tried to brush it off my sleeves, but the snow was already frozen where it had landed. It looked so pretty, scattered in random figures, that I wanted to show it to someone, and it saddened me to think that there was no one who would understand.

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| 252 | <i>Nanigoto o
Inori ka subeki
Waga sode no
Kōri wa token
Kata mo araji o</i> | What, I wonder,
Can be the use of further prayer
Since I find
There is no way to melt the ice
Frozen to my tear-stained sleeves? |
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At my lonely lodging, the snow, perhaps waiting for a fresh fall to bear it company, still had not completely melted, and the sky stayed vaguely overcast.

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| 253 | <i>Sarade dani
Furinishi koto no
Kanashiki ni
Yuki kakikurasu
Sora mo nagameji¹⁰⁸</i> | Even without this,
Those things which have befallen
Would still be sad.
And now the sky is dark with snow:
I cannot bear to gaze upon it. |
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Despite my resolve, I gazed all night long at the sky. At times the clouds rolled in. At others they were swept away. Their patterns never for a moment remained the same.

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| 254 | <i>Ōzora wa
Hare mo kumori mo
Sadamenaki o
Mi no uki koto wa
Itsu mo kawaraji¹⁰⁹</i> | The over-arching sky,
Now clear, now filled with clouds,
Forever in motion,
While constant only in suffering,
My drifting life will never change. |
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The sound of the bird clappers outside seemed to add to my loneliness. The year was drawing to a close. The fields and the nearby trees had withered and been swept bare by the wind. In such a world, bereft of anything that would call forth memories, there was much to which my fate might be compared.

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| 255 | <i>Aki sugite
Naruko wa kaze ni
Nokorikeri
Nani no nagori mo
Hito no yo zo naki</i> | Autumn is gone,
And the sound of the bird clapper
Lingers in the wind.
No memories, no reminders of the
past
Remain for me in the world of men. |
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¹⁰⁸ The word 'furi' carries two meanings — 'to fall' and 'to grow old, to age'.

¹⁰⁹ 'Hare', 'kumori', and 'uki' are *engo*.

Ice had formed in the tiny stream in the valley,¹¹⁰ but from time to time I could still hear the water flowing. Its mournful sound brought many things to mind.

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| 256 | <i>Tanigawa wa</i>
<i>Konoha tojimaze</i>
<i>Kōredomo</i>
<i>Shita ni wa taenu</i>
<i>Mizu no oto kana</i> | Choked with leaves,
The tiny stream in the valley
Is frozen over,
But beneath the ice, unceasing,
Ah! the sound of flowing water! |
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I started for the Capital while it was still dark. Along Shiga Strand,¹¹¹ where our road lay, I noticed that ice had formed in the inlets. It was as if the waves rolling in froze as they were and did not flow out again. A fine snow had fallen, and all about me was purest white.

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| 257 | <i>Urayamashi</i>
<i>Shiga no urawa no</i>
<i>Kōri toji</i>
<i>Kaeranu nami mo</i>
<i>Mata kaerinan</i> | How envious I am!
Ice piles up on Shiga Strand,
Yet the frozen waves,
Though held back now, unlike him,
Surely will return once more. |
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The deep green surface of the lake was broken by menacing blackish waves. Not far off, still within sight, was a route favored by the boatmen. It stretched into the distance, eventually becoming one with the sky. Tiny boats rowed through the clouds until they were out of sight. From my vantage point, with the wind and waves so fierce, they did not present an inviting picture. On the barren shore, without trees or grasses, the wind was so strong that I found it difficult to bear. Nonetheless, had I heard, quite beyond my fondest hopes, that he who had plunged into the waves was dwelling in such a place as this, no matter how unlivable it might have been, I would have gone there to stay by his side.

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| 258 | <i>Koishinobu</i>
<i>Hito ni Ōmi no</i>
<i>Umi naraba</i>
<i>Araki nami ni mo</i>
<i>Tachimajiramashi</i> ¹¹² | By the Sea of Ōmi,
Were I able to meet my love,
The one for whom I long,
Gladly would I spend my life
Mingling with these wild waves. |
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¹¹⁰ The text in Hisamatsu, p. 486, has 'musebinagara' ('although it wept chokingly'), which even the editors point out does not make much sense in the context. I have followed the reading 'musubinagara' of the *Gunsho Ruijū* text.

¹¹¹ That is, the shores of Lake Biwa, which is located in Shiga prefecture.

¹¹² *Gyokuyōshū*, no. 2403 (xvii: *zō no uta*, 4). 'Ōmi' is a *kakekotoba*, being a place name and also containing the word *ou*, 'to meet'.