

Semi-Recluses (*tonseisha*) and Impermanence (*mujiō*):
Kamo no Chōmei and Urabe Kenkō

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INTRODUCTION

The deep spiritual crisis faced by the Japanese of the Kamakura period strengthened and developed a type of literature written by or about people who had escaped this world. This is known as the literature of seclusion (*inja no bungaku*). The term "seclusion" has a wide range of meaning when applied to the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, for a desire to escape from a society in process of drastic change, to reject its social norms, and to search for freedom, had a deep impact on people living in what was considered to be the end period of the Buddhist Doctrine (*mappō*). There were several ways to escape the shackles of the human laws of this world. Some followed a religious path and some a lay path. Unable to cope with the fall of the old society and the rise of new values, some chose to reject completely the world and to hide themselves away in order to follow the Buddhist path. This class of holy men (*hijiri*; *intonsha*) can be exemplified by Genpin Sōzu, Zōga Shōnin, and the other heroes idealized in *setsuwa* collections. Others (*tonseisha*), in spite of their desire to shut themselves up in huts and cut off all human relations, lacked such a deep faith and could not endure the hardships of the undertakings of these holy men. A good example is Yukinaga (to whom Kenkō, ca.1280-ca. 1352, erroneously attributes the compilation of *Heike monogatari*) who, in spite of having become a priest, could not abandon his love for learning (Kidō 1977, p.237; Keene 1981, pp.186-187). Finally, even those people who followed much less religious paths can be included among the recluses (*inja*), for they also rejected the conventions of this world, left their houses, if not their wives and children, and gave up their jobs in their search for freedom and for

Michele MARRA

what could please them most. They were the masters of the new emerging arts like *renga* and tea-ceremony, or even the masters of the art of pleasures described by Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693) in his *Kindaiyasainja* (Ishida Yoshisada 1969, pp.18-27).

In this paper we shall be concerned with the category of *tonseisha*, those men who felt their inadequacy to follow the rules of this world but who were unable to discard them completely, entangled as they were in worldly things such as art and learning. As models of this category we will take Kamo no Chōmei (1153-1216) and Urabe Kenkō (ca. 1280-ca. 1352), and attempt to examine their position on the problem of impermanence (*mujō*) in the answers they gave in order to solve it.

KAMO NO CHŌMEI

The collection of legendary-tales entitled *Jikkishō* (1259) explains Kamo no Chōmei's motivation to take the tonsure as the result of his failure in obtaining the post his father had held at the Kamo shrine and of the consequent grudge he felt against the society which had so frustrated his plans (Nagazumi 1942, pp.251-253). In fact, we know that at the age of fifty-three Chōmei renounced the world in spite of both the large fame he had already won as a poet and of Emperor Go-Toba's (r. 1183-1198) willingness to create a new position for him at the Kamo shrine. The tale in the *Jikkishō* openly criticizes Chōmei's worldly attachments, in spite of his profession of following the religious path.

The *Hōjōki* (The Ten Foot Square Hut, 1212), written by Chōmei after five years of seclusion in Ōhara and four years on Mt. Hino, is entirely devoted to contrasting the feelings of shame (*haji*) and compassion (*aware*) which still bound Chōmei to the phenomenological world; shame for himself who looks like a mendicant priest when going out to the capital, and compassion for those who still live in the capital, unaware of the beauty of a hermit's life (Miki 1976, p.38; Sadler 1970, pp.19-20). Chōmei denies the

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

value of life in the capital in order to stress the high value of his present life of seclusion. This attitude reflects his role as a victim of a cruel society which has necessitated his mountain escape. The *Hōjōki* provides a platform from which the new nobility that had grown out of the Genpei war is addressed with sarcasm and contempt, and herein impermanence (*mujō*) acts like the just revenger against that nobility. Chōmei seems to feel a sense of satisfaction at the news of the end of noble families, as if his mountain hut and its inhabitant could be exempted from decay and death (Miki 1976, p. 35; Sadler 1970, p. 17).

But a clearer demonstration of Chōmei's mundane concerns is offered by his treatment of the mountain hut which had never received such a high praise through any other recluse's brush. The bamboo veranda, the shelf for the offerings to Buddha, Amida Buddha's picture, the leather cases containing books of Japanese poems, music, and religious texts like the *Ōjōyōshū*, the presence of koto and biwa, the tiny garden facing the northern side of the hut, and all the surroundings (Miki 1976, pp. 31-32; Sadler 1970, pp. 13-14) are the picture of the perfect, miniaturized nobleman's villa, reflecting the aesthetic ideals of elegance and refinement of the Heian nobility. Moreover, the idealized picture of nature surrounding the hut where Chōmei finds solace in his lonely days, and which seems to spring out of a page of bucolic poetry, is quite different from the terrifying picture of nature dispensing typhoons, famines, floods, pestilences, and earthquakes at the beginning of the work. This life-style has been interpreted as Chōmei's dandyism (Karaki 1955, pp. 86-87) and is the starting point for the explanation of Chōmei's approach to life. He tried to build a space for freedom inside the ancient ideals of taste and refinement (*fūryū fūga*), whose hero is the so-called *sūkimono*, the man who knows how to reach the goal of elegance through his total dedication to his art, the man whose only fault, if such it can be called, is that of being too attached or too in love with something. The second part of the *Hōjōki* is entirely a song of praise

Michele MARRA

addressed to the figure of the *sūkimono* who has thrown away everything except poetry and music. Chōmei's love for music is also confirmed in a passage from the *Minamoto no Ienaga nikki*, where, at Retired Emperor Go-Toba's request to give him his precious biwa, Chōmei refused with a poem:

I cannot part
From the sound of the storm
Striking this hidden peak (Hirohata 1978, p. 52).

But, already at the end of the *Hōjōki*, Chōmei was aware of his failure to reach the goal of those men living in seclusion, and of the impossibility of abandoning his worldly attachments for the religious principles he had decided to follow. In order to solve or, at least, to give a more coherent answer to these problems, he started to collect stories on faith and salvation, assembling the collection of *setsuwa* tales entitled *Hosshinshū* (Awakening of Faith, 1208-16).

Chōmei's main concern in his new work is to find a solution to the Buddhist theory according to which people were living in the third, last and worst period of the Buddhist Doctrine, the period of the degenerative Dharma (*mappō*). We know that this theory, formulated in China during the Sui and T'ang dynasties, stressed the fact that history was developing in a regressive order after the death of the historical Buddha, thus making impossible the teaching of the Buddhist doctrine to common minds lost in the illusory nature of reality.¹ The preface to the

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1. This degenerative development of history was divided into three periods: the True Dharma (*shōbō*); the Counterfeit Dharma (*zōbō*); and the the Degenerative Dharma (*mappō*). In the *Daihōdōdaijikkō* these three periods are further divided into five 500 year periods. 1) The True Dharma was that period when enlightenment was assured to everybody. 2) The Period of Strong Meditation was the period of the beginning of the Counterfeit Dharma, when all monks were practicing deep meditation. 3) The Period of Strong Information was the period of the end of the period of the

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

Hosshinshū shows Chōmei's full consciousness of living in and suffering from the consequences of mappō, and explains that his role in collecting the stories was to show the path towards salvation through a practical interpretation of Buddhism. Chōmei felt that the time of the long debates about mappō was over and that it was already time to escape it. Such an attitude can be seen only from the early Kamakura era. At the beginning of the ninth century, Kyōkai, the compiler of the *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki* (Miraculous Stories of Karmic Retribution of Good and Evil in Japan), wrote that he was already living "in the age of the degenerate Dharma following the first two periods" (Nakada 1975, p.257), but this statement had not yet been confirmed by historical evidence. It was the simple result of doctrinal discussions handed down through the Buddhist scriptures and, in Japan, through the *Sangyōgisho*, a commentary on these scriptures by Shōtoku Taishi (574-622). This is proved by the fact that Kyōkai's purpose was to encourage the accumulation of good karma for the present life, in order to obtain rewards in this physical world, without any concern for salvation or the way to achieve it. Kamo no Chōmei turned the problem upside down, as did other compilers of setsuwa collections of the same time, by looking for a way to escape the present world and giving practical examples of people who succeeded in doing just this. But let us look at the preface to

Counterfeit Dharma when many still listened to the sūtra and followed the commandments. 4) The period of Temple Building was the period of the beginning of the Degenerative Dharma, when the path was not followed, but still many temples and pagodas were being built. 5) The Period of Violent Fighting was the period of the end time of the Degenerative Dharma, when the teachings are completely forgotten, the monks neglect the commandments, and fighting arises which increase pagan views. In this theory, the three periods last 2500 years, and the first year of the Degenerative Dharma would be 552 A.D. Another theory takes the three periods as 1000 years each, and then mappō would begin 500 years later, in 1052. See T. 83, *Zokushoshūbu* 14, p.664; Ozawa 1974, pp.12-13.

Michele MARRA

the *Hosshinshū*:

Buddha taught the following thing: "You can become master of your heart but never trust your heart as your master."² How true these words are! During one's entire life there is no single thought which is not evil. Even those people who transform themselves by wearing clerical robes and avoiding all worldly defilements do not escape their true nature: the wild deer is difficult to keep tied, while the domestic dog does not leave its master.³ It must be much worse for those who, ignoring the principle of karmic retribution, take the wrong path leading to glory and wealth. Tied by the bonds of the five cravings [for property, lust, food, glory, and rest], they finally fall to the depths of hell. Who among the mindful would not fear such a destiny?

Therefore, reflecting upon the unreliable and dull nature of our hearts, we should not trust them, as has been taught by Buddha, but we should escape from the cycle of birth and death and try to be born into the Pure Land as soon as possible,—like a shepherd who succeeds in reaching a distant place on a wild horse.

But human hearts are both strong and weak, both deep and shallow. When I consider my own heart, I see that it is not exempt from good, neither it is free from evil, easily bent like grass before the wind or hard to keep still like the moon reflected on the waves.⁴

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2. This is a quotation from the *Daihatsunehangyō* (T.374, chapter 20), used by Genshin in his *Ōjōyōshū* (The Teachings Essential for Rebirth), chū, chapter 5.
 3. The metaphor of the deer as representing a good disposition wherein one easily abandons the human heart and of the dog as representing a bad disposition always attached to its abode is presented by the *Daihatsunehangyō* (Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra), T. 374, chapter 15, and repeated again in the *Ōjōyōshū*, chū, chapter 5.
 4. This is another metaphor taken from the *Yūimakyō*, i.e., the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*, T. 474, and repeated in the *Ōjōyōshū jō*, chapter 2.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

How could such a dull heart be reached by the Buddhist teachings?

Buddha, knowing the variety of human hearts, teaches us through parables and metaphors. If we could meet with Buddha, which method would he use to lead us along his path? Since we cannot penetrate others' hearts, limited as we are to the simple knowledge of ourselves, we lack the means to teach dull human beings. However wonderful their content may be, how small the profit coming from all those teachings!

Therefore, considering the shallowness of my own heart, I collected and wrote down stories read and listened to here and there, without looking for profound doctrines. So that, looking at wise actions we may, to the best of our ability, aim towards the Buddhist goal and improve ourselves by observing foolish behavior. Now, as far as this book is concerned, I did not write down tales coming from countries far away like India or China, neither did I collect stories of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas unsuitable for me. I have only recorded those easily understood stories of people of our country, which I had occasion to listen to.

Therefore mistakes will not be few and you'll find only a little truth. As for those stories I could not check twice, I omitted names of places and people, since it would have been like capturing the clouds or scooping up the wind. Who is going to take these stories into serious account? Since I do not intend readers to believe in these stories, they will not need any validating authority. These trivial stories are intended only to awaken our faith and pacify our hearts, while listened to along a road" (Miki 1976, pp.43-45).

Chōmei's argument develops according to the following points:

1. Recognition that the human mind is naturally bad, and that the only way to salvation is to pray in order to be reborn into Amida's paradise.

Michele MARRA

2. Recognition of the foolish, fragile, unstable nature of the mind which makes men fundamentally unreliable.

3. Awareness of the difficulty of the Buddhist doctrine, and necessity to find a way to bring common people to salvation.

4. Chōmei's methodology in choosing the stories.

The first practical solution Chōmei gives in order to bring men to salvation is to put aside what is too abstruse to be understood, i.e., Buddhist theory, and to present examples of holy men (*hijiri*) to whose behavior readers should conform. It is interesting to note the sophisticated process undergone by the holy men portrayed in the *Hosshinshū*, as well as in other *setsuwa* collections of the same time. They are presented in a highly idealized manner, as examples of those Buddhist teachings too difficult to understand in their pure theoretical form. We will now examine such a process in a few stories about the two most famous heroes among the holy men, Genpin Sōzu and Zōga Shōnin.

The account of Genpin Sōzu, a learned monk of the Yamashina temple, is paced at the beginning of the collection, thus indicating that he is considered to be the prototype of holy men. Two anecdotes have been reported of his life. In the first he decides to leave the temple and to refuse the important appointment as Senior High Priest of Buddhism (*daisōzu*) bestowed on him by Emperor Heizei (r. 806-9). He vanishes leaving his disciples and all who knew him deeply grieved. He wanders up to the northeastern provinces and takes on the life of a layman, working as a ferryman, refusing any boat fares, and only taking the food necessary to survive. He vanishes again as soon as he realizes that he has been recognized by a former disciple traveling to the north (*Hosshinshū* 1.1; Miki 1976, pp.46-49; English translation by Ury 1972, pp.153-155).

In the second anecdote, Genpin makes a living as the groom of a certain district chief in Iga province who has himself been exiled by the governor of the same province

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

because of some trifling offense. Genpin suggests that his master should go with him to the governor to try and settle the matter peacefully, but the master does not trust Genpin very much because of his low position. Nevertheless they both go to the governor's residence and, when the monk steps inside, all the people assembled there fall to their knees to do him honor. The governor is extremely happy to see Genpin again after such a long time, and immediately forgives the district chief. Genpin disappears without giving his master time to inquire about him (*Hosshinshū* 1,2; Miki 1976, pp.50-53; Ury 1972, pp.155-157. See also the *Kojidan* in Shimura 1980, pp.104-109. A third anecdote on Genpin's sexual purity appears in *Hosshinshū* 4,6, Miki 1976, pp.179-182).

As far as Zōga Shōnin (917-1003), a holy man well known for his eccentric behavior, is concerned, the *Konjaku monogatari* (c. 1120) gives us the most realistic picture of his "madness."⁵ In spite of being a renowned scholar, he does not hesitate to touch with his own hands the offerings destined for the monks of the Enryakuji, usually touched only by servants. He shares his food with laborers, careless of his own high status. Summoned by the widow of Emperor En'yū (r. 969-984) who is willing to take the tonsure, he insults the Empress after the ceremony and defecates in the Palace under the bewildered looks of incredulous courtiers. On the verge of death he sends for a go-board wishing to play the game all by himself and asks for saddle-flaps to be brought to him so that, pulling them over his head, he can finally dance, fulfilling a wish conceived many years before.

5. *Konjaku monogatari* 12:33; 19:18. Mabuchi 1971, 1, pp.306-313 and 2, pp.576-580. Anecdotes concerning Zōga Shōnin are found in several other works, among which can be numbered: *Hokkegenki*, ge 82; *Zoku honchō ōjōden*; *Genkōshakusho*; *Tōnomine ryakki*; *Zōga shōnin kogyōki*; *Jijyu hyakuinnenshū*; *Kyōkunshō* 5; *Sankoku denki* 10-15; *Hosshinshū* 1:5; *Senjūshō* 1:1; *Kojidan*: *Ujishūi monogatari* 12:7.

Michele MARRA

As Genpin Sōzu is the first holy man to appear in the *Hosshinshū*, Zōga Shōnin opens the contemporaneous setsuwa collection *Senjūshō*, where Zōga is presented in the act of offering his robe to beggars. He leaves the temple completely naked and, of course, his colleagues think him to be mad. But Zōga uses his presumed madness to be freed from his duties at the temple, abandoning the last obstacles towards the way to enlightenment.

Long ago there was a man called Zōga Shōnin. Since childhood he possessed a deep faith, performing obeisance rites for a thousand nights at the Central Hall of Enryakuji. He must have felt how hard it was to reach perfect enlightenment in spite of these many prayers. When he went to the Great Shrine of Ise as a lonely pilgrim, he saw the incarnation of the deity Amaterasu in a dream, saying: "If you wish to achieve faith, you shouldn't think of yourself as a self."

Startled by those words, he decided to abandon wealth and fame. He gave all his clothes to beggars. Not having any clothes on him, he left the temple completely naked. Those who saw him thought him crazy and quite terrible and unpleasant to see, and though he was surrounded by a very curious crowd, he was not perturbed at all.

He pursued his travels begging and, after four days, climbed Mt. Hiei. When he entered the room which was held by monk Jie, his previous teacher, a colleague said: "Zōga has gone crazy," and all the monks looking at him were ashamed. The High Priest summoned him secretly, addressing him with these words of warning: "I knew that you had abandoned wealth and fame but not that your behavior had reached such a point. Be quick to restore your dignity and to abandon wealth and fame!" "It is exactly because I abandoned wealth and fame a long time ago that I am now like this," he replied and, adding, "How happy is my self," he stood up and left. The High Priest also went out of the main

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

gate, following him with his eyes full of tears. Finally, Zōga turned his steps to a place called Tōnomine in Yamato, and went to live in the ruined hut belonging to the master of meditation, Chirō.

Fame and wealth are really unpleasant. They stem from the three evils of greed, anger, and ignorance, forcing men to conceive many falsehoods in order to support their mistaken view. For men, born in a military house, to pair arrows in the quiver, to unsheathe the sword and to die in the vanguard is just the victorious price of fame and wealth. To trace the thin line of the eyebrow, to soak garments in orchid and musk scent, to enjoy the last wind of autumn, these actions are nothing but the craving for fame and wealth. Moreover, as for those people who wear priestly garb and clutch rosaries, who had planned to be converted and to abandon the world, if they seek the highest positions and offices, mix with the nobility, and wonder when they will become like one of the many masters of meditation, they won't ever become free of the evils of fame and wealth. The list of similar examples, where the principle of Buddhahood is unknown, is endless. Those people in whose eyes it becomes clear through meditation that the nature of reality is a mere conception and who know the truth of the scriptures but who do not discard this world—they are bound to float upon the sea of birth and death. Although everybody tries to escape from this sea, life follows death, death follows life, and it is hard to correct human thoughts. Nevertheless Zōga Shōnin freed himself from the shackles of fame and wealth—isn't that an event over which we should rejoice? How could he have reached this point without the help of the Great Deity of Ise? When we think that a person covered by clouds of greed and ignorance and perpetually darkened by the craving for fame and wealth, has washed himself in the waves of the Isuzu river and extinguished himself in the light of the deity Amaterasu, we must acknowledge what an

Michele MARRA

incredible and noble deed was performed. When shall such a thing be forgotten? (Nishio 1970, pp.28-30)."⁶

The idealization which this story of Genpin has undergone becomes clear when we look at the historical Genpin as he is portrayed in the *Ruijūkokuishi* (compiled by Sugawara no Michizane in 982) and in the *Nihonkōki* (840). We are informed that no appointment was ever bestowed upon him by the court, although Genpin did frequently receive alms from the Emperor because of his fame as a magician practicing in mountain forests. That fame was a cause of great rejoicing for the people living in his village as, out of respect for Genpin, the court did not collect the annual rice-taxes (Itō 1972, p.245). Rather than embodying the image of the holy man concealing his virtues and refusing practical rewards, Genpin was originally a performer of magical rites for both private and public sponsors. The account in the *Hosshinshū* is the product of the mind of a learned monk coming of noble family, well acquainted with Tendai doctrines. But nothing of this can be found in the historical Genpin, whose medieval biographers had to add the fictitious relationship between himself and Emperors Kanmu and Heizei in order to stress his strength of character in discarding fame and wealth. At the same time they invented the account of his sudden disappearance whenever his freedom from the shackles of the world was threatened and the secrecy of his virtue was in danger.

The same process of idealization noted in the case of Genpin can be found in the description of Zōga. It has in fact been demonstrated on the basis of historical evidence that Zōga, although a learned monk versed in the philosophy of Tendai Buddhism, was never granted a high title in the clerical hierarchy which could justify his familiarity with the imperial court. Not only this, but most of the

6. In this case a new element is added to Zōga's story, the relation between Shintoism and Buddhism deriving from strong influence of *honji suijaku* thought.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

episodes concerning his madness are inconsistent with historical facts (See Hirabayashi 1963, pp.111-114 on the inconsistencies in his weird behaviour toward Emperor Reizei). These fabricated accounts reflect the idea that the Way of the Buddha and the Way of the Emperor have lost their original unitary character and the idea that a practical Buddhism aimed at achieving the safety of the country has been replaced by a practical Buddhism concerned with private salvation. This tendency, already felt by the end of the Heian era, became a kind of neurosis caused by the fear of living at the end of the Doctrine.

Zōga's madness is interpreted by Chōmei, as well as by the author of the *Senjūshō*, as perfect freedom from worldly bounds, as a way to be born into Amida's Paradise. Madness becomes synonymous with truth, while common sense modeled on worldly experiences shares with the present world its character of illusion. Rebuked by the monks of his own congregation, Zōga replies without being perturbed at all: "It is not I who am mad but you of the congregation seem to be mad, talking this way" (*Hosshinshū*, 1, 5; Miki 1976, p.61). Such a desire for seclusion leads Zōga to hide himself in Tōnomine, coming to the capital only in order to scold his own master Ryōgen (912-985) for having accepted the appointment as High Priest (*sōjō*) bestowed upon him by the Emperor (Miki 1976, pp.62-63; Ury 1972, pp.161-163).

Most of the holy men portrayed in the *Hosshinshū* share several common characteristics. They wander either in deep mountains, mountain villages, city streets, or far away countries; they all live in a mental state of reclusion, even if they have to mix with other people in order to sustain their life; they tend to possess as little as possible in order to reduce to a minimum their cravings; whenever their peace of mind is in danger, they immediately conceal themselves and their actions and, in order to do so, they even pretend to commit crimes. This is explained by the fact that the theoretical framework on which the holy man's portrait was based came from the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*

Michele MARRA

(Makashikan, Great Concentration and Insight), a scripture of the Tendai sect by the Chinese monk Chih-i (538-597), imported to Japan at the beginning of the Heian era. Here we read an exhortation to conceal our virtues, to show our flaws and our madness, and to hide our body. Three verbs describe the behavior of a holy man: to give away, to hide, and to leave. To give away fame and wealth, the source of boundless craving; to hide the performance of good actions which have a meaning in themselves and which are not done in anticipation of a possible reward; to leave our environment in order to reduce to the minimum our attachments to the world (Sekiguchi 1966, 2, 149). The immediate consequences of these teachings were the practice of secret charity, the exposure of sins, eccentric behavior and wandering in distant places. These are all ways to escape from the net of fame and wealth threatening even those monks surrounded by too many pupils and public rewards (For parallel themes in the *Ōjōyōshū*, see Hanayama 1972, pp. 586-590).

In the light of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan's* teachings we can explain Genpin's sudden disappearance and Zōga's weird behavior. We also understand why Chōmei included in his collection the story of the monk who asked the governor of Mimasaka, Akiyoshi, for provisions because he had committed a crime against a woman who was now going to have his baby, for he wanted at least to support the woman. As a matter of fact, the monk's crime was pretended⁷ and the provisions were requested in order to secure food for his spiritual retreat. When Akiyoshi understood the trick, he acknowledged the holiness of the monk and sent

7. An analogous example appears in *Hosshinshū* 1: 11 (How a Holy Man near Mt. Kōya Took a Wife as a Deception). It is interesting to note that Chōmei portrays the holy man Genpin in analogous circumstances. Genpin becomes fascinated by the wife of a Councillor and he is able to arrange a meeting with the woman thanks to her husband's benevolence. But, finally the monk understands the impurity of his action and leaves the spot without even entering the woman's room (*Hosshinshū* 4:6; Miki 1976, pp. 179-182).

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

him further provisions, but the holy man had already left his hut (*Hosshinshū* 1,12; Miki 1976, pp.83-87; Ury 1972, pp.171-173). This tale points out that pretended crime is also an expedient used in order to reach salvation, a way to conceal one's virtue by showing only one's faults. It describes the holy man's psychology as troubled by too much praise from people who admire the strength of his seclusion. Therefore he makes up stories of evil in order to transform praise into blame. Of course this does not work when people understand that the evil is feigned, and that the "false evil" is the good in contrast to the "false holiness" of those monks living in a temple. At this point praise becomes even greater, and the monk has to vanish again. Moreover, the episode mentioned above shows the tendency, common at that time, to trust in the help of an outside holy power, usually Amida's benevolence (*tariki*). We cannot be saved if we do not commit something which makes salvation necessary. Therefore, evil becomes an indispensable element on the way to salvation, so that it is easier for a sinner to reach Amida's Paradise than for a good man. This idea, later developed by Shinran (1173-1262), is already present in this story (See Masuda 1964, pp.1-8 on this tradition concerning the presence of evil).

Thus the *Hosshinshū* is Chōmei's attempt to build the figure of the perfectly enlightened man who does not suffer the contradictions he himself experienced during the years when he composed the *Hōjōki*. The reader's assimilation of the book's didactic purpose is the first step on the path towards salvation, a step made easier by the fact that all philosophical issues have been given a concrete form through practical examples. The process of idealization used by Chōmei in the presentation of Tendai doctrines aims at delivering people from the fear caused by the consciousness of living at the end period of the Buddhist Doctrine.

The attentive imitation of the holy men's behavior and the reflection upon the words of a good preacher can only start the process towards salvation which nonetheless

remains ineffective if other elements do not occur at the same time.⁸ All the requirements necessary to attain birth into Amida's Paradise are summarized in the epilogue to the sixth book. We will divide them into external and internal powers, which shows Chōmei's attempt to balance and harmonize the beliefs in the passive trust in Amida's benevolence (*tariki*) on the one hand and in the necessity of one's personal efforts in order to reach salvation (*jrīki*) on the other hand. The external powers are exemplified by 1) Amida's vow and 2) *nenbutsu* practice.

People living at the end period of the Doctrine have no choice but to listen attentively to Amida's promise to save all human beings, if they would have their faith awakened and feel, even if for a short moment, the aspiration and willingness to be born into Amida's Paradise (*Hosshinshū* 5, 12; Miki 1976, p.235). The same idea comes up again at the end of the sixth book where it is clearly stated that Amida's vow is going to save all human beings, but only if they long for Amida's Paradise, believe in him, trust him, and recite his name. Therefore, thanks to Amida's vow, the sins of all common beings (*bonbu*) will be forgotten and they will necessarily attain birth into his Paradise, if only they won't forget to invoke his name (*Hosshinshū* 5, 13; Miki 1976, pp.290-293). The warrior Sukesbige reached immediate birth with only one invocation of Amida's name (*Hosshinshū* 2, 9; Miki 1976, pp.117-118). Kichidaiu, who had never heard the name of Buddha in his life, is saved by ten recitations of Amida's name. But that would have been to no avail without Kichidaiu's final conversion, since, as Chōmei says, quoting the *Ojōyōshū*: "The man who thinks of Amida's Paradise without forgetting it, will necessarily attain birth" (*Hosshinshū* 2, 10; Miki 1976, pp.119-121).

8. The fierce warrior Minamoto no Yoriyoshi was converted by the moving words of a holy man, *Hosshinshū* 3:3, Miki 1976, pp.131-133. The killer Gendaiu experienced a sudden conversion while listening to a monk's sermon during a memorial service (*kuyō*). *Hosshinshū* 3:4, Miki 1976, pp.133-136.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

Here we enter the field of the internal powers which are essential in reaching the ultimate goal, namely, 1) faith, 2) repentance, 3) deep motivation, and 4) a pacified heart.

Deep faith in Amida won the fierce killer Gendaiu the remission of all the crimes he had perpetrated in the past, in much the same way as repentance saved the cruel warrior Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (*Hosshinshū* 3, 3; Miki 1976, pp.131-133). Repentance and faith have the power to break the chain of karma against which the human will could have done nothing, according to Kyōkai's *Nihon ryōiki*. At the end of the story of a woman who finally repented from her jealousy and became a nun, Chōmei says:

You should think of the deepness of your past crimes just as of a joke in a dream, and repent even if only for a brief moment. It has been said that the crimes of a sinful man who has repented even a little won't be accounted as final retribution (*Hosshinshū* 5, 3; Miki 1976, p.211, where the source of the quotation is not identified).

The *Hosshinshū* records the story of Tao-ch'o (562-645), the Chinese patriarch of the Jōdo school who, uncertain of his birth into Amida's Paradise, urged his pupil, Shan-tao, to consult Buddha on this point. Buddha answers that those who are not negligent in their motivation (*kokorozashi*) to achieve salvation, will attain birth without doubt (*Hosshinshū* 2, 13; Miki 1976, pp.125-126).

A pacified heart is the result of mastering all these elements. Only such repentance, faith, deep motivation, and religious practices can bring men to a total detachment from external hindrances. It is, therefore, the most difficult step to achieve and the last before reaching Amida. It justifies all sorts of actions since the man who has a pacified heart is already above actions, as in the case of the holy man of Mt. Shosha who concealed himself, refusing to take any food in order to reach Amida (*Hosshinshū* 3, 7; Miki 1976, pp.143-148). In this case suicide is the simple,

Michele MARRA

symbolic removal of the last obstacle, for all other real obstacles, cravings, have been previously removed. This is confirmed by the story of the monk, Rengejō, who expressed to his friend monk Tōren his desire to close his life by drowning himself while invoking Amida's name. Of no avail were Tōren's attempts to dissuade him. At the appointed time Rengejō killed himself in the Katsura River, under the revering looks of many spectators who had gathered for the occasion. But after a few days Tōren fell ill, and when he prayed to Rengejō's spirit, it came in anger, for in point of fact Rengejō had not succeeded in reaching Amida's Paradise since, at the time of his drowning, he regretted his decision and wanted to come back, but it was too late and he didn't have the courage to give it up in front of so many spectators, so he decided to go on with it (*Hosshinshū* 3 8; Miki 1976, pp.148-151; for parallel stories see *Hosshinshū* 3, 5 and 3, 6).

The accusation against Rengejō here is that his motivation to reach Amida's Paradise was too shallow and that his heart was not yet pacified. He didn't turn all his attention to the concept of birth. His suicide was a mere external act entirely lacking the attainments of the holy man of Mt. Shosha. Therefore he couldn't have been saved by Amida who had promised salvation only to all those men willing to give their life to him, for "they won't really fear to be eaten up by tigers or wolves, and won't feel any pain while starving to death." But let us look at Chōmei's comment on Rengejō's action:

This was the result of past karmic actions and is meant as a warning to people living in this last period. It was an outflow from a pure and straightforward heart. Even people craving for fame, proud and jealous people, who foolishly think of reaching the Pure Land by burning or drowning themselves, can imitate Rengejō's action with their agitated hearts. That's nothing but a pagan kind of austerity, a really wrong view (Miki 1976, p.151).

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

Chōmei's position on this point is very clear and comes as an attempted rationalization of an entire literature on religious suicide, which was widespread in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The *Zoku honchō ōjōden* (ca. 1099-1103), the *Shūi ōjōden* (ca. 1139), and the *Zoku shūi ōjōden* (ca. 1139) all relate stories of laymen and monks burning, drowning, or poisoning themselves, or letting themselves starve to death in order to reach the Pure Land the quickest way. Other stories present people drifting in the southern sea in pursuit of the island of Mt. Fudara, the mountain of Amida, knowing that from that journey they would never return (for a summary of similar episodes, see Baba 1974, pp.153-169). Such behavior was justified by the example of the Lotus Sūtra where the Bodhisattva Sarvasattvapriyadarśana burns his own body as an offering to the Buddha. This act is considered much more praiseworthy than the offering of entire realms and walled cities (Sakamoto 1962, ge, pp.178-180; Hurvitz 1976, pp.294-295). This belief was reinforced in Amidist circles by the fact that Shan-Tao (d. 681), the Chinese patriarch of the Pure Land School, was born in Paradise after having committed suicide by throwing himself from a tree.⁹

For Chōmei, suicide, either burning or drowning or starving oneself to death, does not bring one to salvation, although he does not exclude the possibility of attaining birth in Paradise through suicide if this is supported by deep determination (*kokorozashi*) and a pacified heart which enable the person committing suicide to bear its pain. If he feels pain, his heart cannot be pacified. At the base of such a strong resolution there must be Amida's vow

9. Suicide performed for religious purposes gave rise to a strong reaction. For example Nakayama Tadachika (1131-1195), in his *Kirei Mondō* (Gunsho Ruijū, vol. 139), harshly denounced this practice, not only from legalistic considerations, but also on moral grounds. Quoted in Itō 1973, pp.36-37.

which enables all the converted to attain his realm with a strong faith.

In spite of the many beliefs mixed in the *Hosshinshū* (nenbutsu, Hokkekyō, Kannon, Fudō, Jizō etc.), Chōmei appears much like a Tendai Jōdo follower. He praises the Lotus Sūtra, stressing its virtue when read in order to reach Amida's Paradise (3, 12; 5, 2) and, at the same time, admires the practice of the invocation of Amida's name (6, 13). This is probably the result of the influence on Chōmei of Yoshishige no Yasutane (?934-1002), on whose *Chiteiki* Chōmei's *Hōjōki* was modeled, and who, in his *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* (ca. 983), set up the theory of the possibility of attaining birth through the unity of the Lotus Sūtra and Amida. Yasutane, a disciple of Zōga Shōnin at Yokawa and an acquaintance of Genshin (942-1071) must have been a source of inspiration for Chōmei during his seclusion (See *Hosshinshū* 2, 3, where he appears under his religious name, Jakushin). But Chōmei's purpose in collecting the stories in the *Hosshinshū* was not to build a coherent body supporting this or that religious sect. As we have already seen at the beginning of this paper, he aimed at finding a solution to the deadlock he reached in his *Hōjōki*, particularly to the contradiction between his active life of attachment to poetry, music, and art and his contemplative life as a recluse at Hino. But he didn't move too far from that *Hōjōki* as far as his approach to life is concerned. He replaced his enthusiasm for poetry and biwa with a passionate love for the nenbutsu and holy scriptures, to the point of being called a *sūkihijiri*, i.e., a holy man too attached to holy things (Kobayashi Yasuharu 1969, pp.123-145). We should rather say that he added new rubrics rather than replaced old ones, since in the *Hosshinshū* the figure of the *sūkimono* reaches its apotheosis. The second part of the sixth book is almost entirely devoted to people who, like Chōmei, couldn't part from their arts, and when we consider how likely it is that of *Hosshinshū*'s eight books only the first six were written by Chōmei, we realize how

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

much Chōmei was concerned with these people.

The *Hosshinshū* stresses the single-mindedness of the *sūkimono*, the fact that he gives himself over completely to the practice of his art, like monk Eisho, whose love for flute-playing makes him forget not only his poverty but all his other problems as well. "How could such a man's conduct be called sinful?" comments Chōmei, making the point that Eisho had been freed from the shackles and necessities of reality thanks to his art (6, 7; Miki 1976, pp.271-273). Art is therefore treated by Chōmei as a sphere of freedom where the poet or the musician can break all ties with the world, in the same way as the holy men Zōga and Genpin did through madness and concealment. Summoned by the Emperor, Tokimitsu was too busy playing his flute to answer the imperial messenger who had to return to court alone. Chōmei ends the story saying that such an attitude is doubtless a skillful means (*hōben*) towards the way to salvation (6, 8; Miki 1976, pp.274-275). The Buddhist practice of the holy man Hōnichi was to recite three different poems at dawn, noon, and twilight, since those who understand the art of *waka* realize the principle (*dōri*) of impermanence incorporated therein. In this tale Genshin is presented as wondering if Buddhism and poetry weren't the same thing (6, 9; Miki 1976, 275-277). *Biwa* playing, when performed in the spirit of the *sūkimono*, can achieve the same result as *nenbutsu* practice, as in the case of Sukemichi who was born into Amida's Paradise thanks to the eagerness with which he used to play his instrument (Miki 1976, pp.277-278).

The awareness of being a *sūimono*, which in the *Hōjōki* had thrown Chōmei into despair, is much less painful in the *Hosshinshū*, where the *sūkimono* is redeemed on account of sharing the same characteristics as those holy men who had reached enlightenment. He does not like to mix with people, preferring a life of seclusion; he does not hesitate to reduce himself to poverty in order to follow his art; he knows how to pacify his heart and escape the dirt of the world. In a word, he realizes the impermanence of all

Michele MARRA

things (mujō), and escapes fame and wealth. Thus Chōmei can conclude that the life of a sūkimono is a door to enlightenment, thus justifying his own behavior.

URABE KENKŌ

While at the end of the *Hōjōki* Kamo no Chōmei was lamenting the fact that he had not really succeeded in grasping the Buddhist truth, Kenkō, a century later, showed how wrong it was to put the problem in Chōmei's terms. To look for an answer outside of what is knowable to the human mind is to enunciate a problem which cannot be solved. The last chapter of the *Tsurezuregusa* must be considered as the starting point of Kenkō's search for meaning in human life. It tells the story of Kenkō himself who, at the age of eight, inquires about Buddha's nature and teachings. His father answers all questions except the last and fundamental one: "Where did the first Buddha who began to teach the Doctrine come from?" His father cannot but laugh at the puzzling question, as does Kenkō himself at the end of his work. "He must have fallen from the sky or else sprung up out of the earth," answered his father with a smile on his face" (Kidō 1977, #243, p.256; Keene 1981, p.201).

It is useless to ask a question when we already know that there is no answer. But to deny the possibility of giving a definition of whatever is outside this world is not a negation of the reality of impermanence (mujō) which had caused so much anguish to the Japanese of the preceding centuries. Everything is subject to the law of impermanence: human relations, social positions, human beings as well as buildings, and this nobody can deny (On the mujō of buildings, see Kidō, #25; of love, see #26; of the position of the Emperor, see #27). What Kenkō tries to do is to exorcize the fear of eternal change through a careful examination of mujō seen from the perspective of this world. He in fact argues that we can find pleasure in this life if only we understand the mechanism moving the cycle of change. Of course such a mechanism is time, the

principle (kotowari) regulating the cycle of life and death. Time is at the base of seasonal changes as well as of human life. But, while seasons change according to an established pattern, death does not follow a predetermined path. "Death does not wait its turn. It does not come from the front but it strikes from behind" (Kidō 1977, #155, p.174; Keene 1981, p.138). When we grasp this principle and learn how to use time in the most satisfactory way we will not be scared by the laws of time, and impermanence will even gain a shade of aesthetic beauty.¹⁰ If time is a basic ingredient of impermanence, man is master of himself since it is up to himself to use time in the most convenient way. Preciousness of time is stressed throughout the *Tsurezuregusa* of which chapter 108 is entirely built on the erroneous human presumption that "nobody begrudges wasting a little time (sun'in, i.e., an instant)" (Kidō 1977, #108, pp.125-126; Keene 1981, pp.91-92).

It has been argued that Kenkō's idea of the preciousness of a single moment was highly influenced by Ippen's (1239-1289) belief in the importance of the present moment (*tadaima no ichinen*) for the *nenbutsu* recitation. Since for Ippen and the Ji sect, the practice of *nenbutsu* had an absolute value apart from any kind of faith, every single moment during the recitation of Amida's name is an instant of eternal life in the world of "selfless truth," an incorporation into a world where there is neither life nor death, and where Buddha and our "selfless self" are the same. *Nenbutsu* practice is the only way to attain birth in Amida's Paradise while living in the present world, and time is the means through which we can achieve it (See Fujiwara 1970, pp.46-87 and pp.123-134). Kenkō retains that part of Ippen's theory which can be applied to the present world, rejecting the metaphysical consequences which cannot bring solace to people in this life. This

10. It is interesting to analyze *Tsurezuregusa* #137, which first stresses the beauty of what is already dead or about to be born, and then treats the swiftness of death's arrival. Kidō, pp.153-158; Keene, pp.115-121.

does not mean that Kenkō's humanism has overcome religious issues. His personality is always split between an active and a contemplative approach to life, and such an attitude is most probably the reason why he has been so often criticized of inconsistency. But if we consider the *Tsurezuregusa* to be the product of a long period of thinking and maturation,¹¹ and take into account Kenkō's personal experiences, we see that his thought starts from well-established religious beliefs and modifies them in order to match the needs of a world itself in deep change, a world which asks for explanations and justifications not grounded in metaphysical premises.

As far as his spiritual life is concerned, we know that Kenkō took the tonsure in 1313, after having served Emperor Go-Nijō (r. 1301-1308) as archivist (*kurōdo*) of the sixth rank, and after having reached the fifth rank with the appointment in 1307 to Assistant of the Imperial Division of the Left Guards (*sahyōe no suke*). His private

11. The old theory of Tachibana Jun'ichi according to which *Tsurezuregusa* would have been written between the end of 1330 and the autumn of 1331 has been proved false by many scholars. Differences in vocabulary between the first 30 chapters and the rest of the work and the overwhelming presence of an anecdotal structure (*setsuwa*) in the second part of the work, have led students to think that the *Tsurezuregusa* was written over a long span of time. Yasuraoka Kōsaku opts for 1319-1331. Miyauchi gives the following scheme:

Preface - chapter 30	= 1308-1320
Chapters 31-100	= 1331-1333
Chapters 101-160	= 1335-1336
Chapters 161-243	= 1347-1348

According to Miyauchi, *Tsurezuregusa* would have been completed in 1349.

Whatever we may think of all these theories, three points are clear: 1. The *Tsurezuregusa* was written over a long span of time. 2. It was written with a clear knowledge of the Kenmu restoration (1334) and of the military deeds of the Ashikaga. 3. The first 30 chapters are the original starting point of *Tsurezuregusa*, presenting a Kenkō longing for the old days of Heian culture. For a recent view, see Nagazumi 1982.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

collection of poetry, the *Kenkō hōshi kashū*, informs us that he retired at Yokawa on Mt. Hiei around 1319-20. But his seclusion didn't last very long if we consider that already in 1320 his fame as a poet was acknowledged to the point that one of his poems was included in the Imperial Anthology *Shoku-senzaiwakashū* (Collection of Thousand Years, Continued, 1320). From this time he started to take part in several poetry contests which made him one of the "four guardians of poetry" (shitennō) of the Nijō school. At the end of his life he must have been very close to the Ashikaga family, for in 1344 several of his poems were included in the *Kōyasan kongō sanmiin hōnō waka*, selected upon the request of Takauji's brother, Tadayoshi (1306-1352). According to the *Entairyaku*, he was sent by Kō no Moronao, general of Ashikaga Takauji, to the Prime Minister Kinsada to enquire about what kind of cloth should be worn when coming to court. Kenkō's ties with the world were even more strengthened by two trips he made to the Kantō plain, where the Horikawa family, under which he had served, had economic interests.¹²

When we consider this double aspect of Kenkō, both withdrawn in his retreat at Yokawa and mingling with the

12. Kenkō's social entanglements become clear when we look at his few available biographical data.

1323: He takes a seat at the *uta-awase* sponsored by Go-Nijō's son, prince Kuninaga. Four of his poems are selected for the *Shikugenyōwakashū*.

1324: He makes an annotated copy of *Kokinshū*.

1326: One of his poems is selected for the *Shoku-goshūiwakashū* (Later Collection of Gleanings, Continued).

1335: Seven of his poems appear in *Nairisenshuwaka*.

1336: He learns from Tameyo (1250-1338) the secret tradition of the Nijō school about *Kokinshū*.

1337: He takes a seat at the *uta-awase* sponsored by Tameyo (*Tameyoke uta-awase*).

1334-45: Some of his poems appear in the *Fujibawakashū* collected by Ogura.

1351: He writes a copy of the *Shoku-kokinshū* (Collection of Ancient and Modern Times, Continued, 1265).

1352: He praises 42 poems of the *Gofukōen'indono gohyakushu*. (See Tomikura 1964, pp.1-106; Nagazumi 1982, pp.11-45 and 103-143.)

most powerful cultural and political personalities of his time, it appears evident that Kenkō's praise both of the Buddhist Way and, at the same time, of human life is more than justified. We interpret the first as the result of his religious experiences and the second as the starting point in his search for a solution not be provided by those experiences. This tendency offers an explanation of Kenkō's personal interpretation of the religious texts, both Tendai and Jōdo, with which he was well acquainted. If, from one side, Kenkō seems to praise those men like Zōga who abandoned worldly ties and human conventions, stressing the principle of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, which says: "Break your ties with your daily activities, with personal affairs, with your arts, and with learning" (Kidō 1977, #75, pp.95-96; Keene 1981, p.67. Also see Kidō, #112, p.129; Keene 1981, p.94, where Zōga is first introduced), at the same time, he realizes that the renunciations of Tendai teachings are not leading to peace of mind in this world. The life of the recluse is dangerous since it tends to forget the importance of the single moment, causing men to waste their life in idleness. This is the same charge that Kenkō accuses himself of at the very beginning of his work, when he calls himself mad (*monogurushi*) for having spent so many years in idleness (*tsurezure*), writing down his thoughts while living like a recluse (Kidō 1977, p.21; Keene 1981, p.3). Kenkō finds fault with those people who have turned their back on the world, living in a thatched hut, since they suppose themselves to be free from the law of impermanence only because they have hidden themselves in deep mountains. Kenkō reminds them that death is threatening them exactly as it does with soldiers going to war (Kidō 1977, #137, pp.157-158; Keene 1981, pp.120-121). It is of no value to conceal one's virtue, pretending to be stupid, which was the attitude expected from a "truly enlightened man who has no learning, no virtue, no accomplishments, no fame" (Kidō 1977, #38, pp.58-59; Keene 1981, pp.35-36).

The Tendai precept of renunciation of fame and profit

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

(myōri) cannot be easily assimilated by a man longing for the culture of the past which stressed the knowledge of Chinese and Japanese poetry, and the best example of which was "a man who could serve as a model to others in matters of precedent and court ceremony" (Kidō 1977, #1, p.23; Keene 1981, p.4). Kenkō's ideas on art didn't change with the passing of time, although he tried to put learning in a more Buddhist perspective, considering it as the only way through which men can refuse high office and reject material gain (Kidō 1977, #130, p.146; Keene 1981, p.110). But this is very far from the total rejection of art preached by the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*, as is Kenkō's presumption that letters are one of the three essential knowledges together with arms and medicines (Kidō 1977, #122, pp.138-139; Keene 1981, pp.194-198). We have to remember that all the seven articles of self-praise written by Kenkō to stress his good points are rooted in his own experience and knowledge and not in traditional textual sources (Kidō 1977, #238, pp.247-251; Keene 1981, pp.194-198).

The same tendency to stress the positive value of life can be seen in Kenkō's use of the *Ichigon hōdan*, an anonymous Jōdo scripture written at the beginning of the Kamakura era. He quotes the words of monk Gyōsenbō:

It is not difficult to seek Buddhist enlightenment. The most important thing is to lead a quiet life, not to be entangled in worldly matters, while making of the Buddhist Way the goal of your life (Miyasaka 1964, p.198).

But Kenkō omits the last part of the above sentence, thus stressing a quiet life that is much easier to lead in this world in place of an abstract religious ideal. He quotes it as: "There is only one way to seek Buddhist enlightenment: you must lead a quiet life and not be entangled in worldly matters. This is the most important thing" (Kidō 1977, 98, p.116; Keene 1981, pp.81-82). Here Kenkō praises a quiet life brightened by art and learning which, as we have seen,

Michele MARRA

helps men to keep a certain distance from mundane concerns. Kenkō is not interested in the after-world as were the saints of the *Ichigon hōdan*. When he reaches the wall of death, he comes back to the present life and time, since problems can be solved only in this world and no external power (*tarikī*) can do anything in order to save human beings. This is also proved by Kenkō's interpretation of the holy man Shinkai who, "realizing the impermanence of this world, never sat down and relaxed but always remained crouching" (Kidō 1977, #49, p.69; Keene 1981, p.43). Kenkō's Shinkai feels how close he is to death and, therefore, he is careful not to waste a single moment in order to avoid the mistake of doing slowly what should have been done quickly, preparing himself to practice the Way. Shinkai's behavior is explained differently by the author of the *Ichigon hōdan*, on which Kenkō's story is based:

A man said: "The holy man Shinkai remained always crouching. Requested to explain the reason for his behavior, he answered, 'The reason is that there is no place where we can sit in the Six Ways of the Three Worlds (=Buddhist universe)'" (Miyasaka 1964, p.199).

In this case Shinkai is crouching because he realizes the illusionary nature of this world and its absence of time. He can stay in this world only on his two feet, an extremely uncomfortable position, while hoping as soon as possible to cut all bonds with it. The *Ichigon hōdan* presents a holy man yearning for birth into Amida's Paradise, so to be freed from this worthless life. But Kenkō emphasizes the importance of time in a world where time is going to end soon. In the *Ichigon hōdan* life is sleeping while waiting for death; in the *Tsurezuregusa* life is awakening since death is coming. Kenkō tries to find values in the present world, in spite of its illusionary nature.

People who hate death should love life. How is it possible for men not to rejoice each day over the

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

pleasure of being alive?" (Kidō 1977, #93, p.112; Keene 1981, p.79)

Of course, Kenkō's position is not always so well defined, but we can say that religious concerns are usually overcome by practical considerations. This applies to many aspects of life traditionally condemned on Buddhist grounds and redeemed by Kenkō's pragmatism. Though alcohol abuse, for example, can have bad consequences,¹³ and a drunkard is considered one of the seven kinds of persons who make bad friends,¹⁴ nevertheless, to be a teetotaler is not a virtue (Kidō 1977, #1, p.23; Keene 1981, p.4), for liquor warms up human relations and pacifies the heart of the warrior (Kidō 1977, #175, pp.192-193 and #215, pp.225-226; Keene 1981, p.152 and pp.176-177). On the same practical grounds Kenkō justifies sexual desire, which is unavoidable and even useful because of the fact that a woman becomes charming and amusing only when she is courted by a man enslaved by his passion (Kidō 1977, 107, #107, p.125; Keene 1981, p.90. For a Buddhist criticism of sexual desire, see numbers 8, 9, 107, and 190 of Kidō 1977). Moreover, Kenkō is moved in the same direction by aesthetic motivations when he acknowledges the absence of elegance in a man without taste for lovemaking, comparing him to a valuable winecup without a bottom (Kidō 1977, #3, pp.24-25; Keene 1981, pp.5-6); here the echo of Heian values is immediately perceived.

Kenkō's practical approach to judging things is the result of his exposure to a reality which makes him

13. See the account of the bad consequences that happened to the priest of Ninnaji for having enjoyed the pleasure of liquor (Kidō, #53, pp.72-73; Keene, pp.46-47), and the parallel account of what happened to Gugakubō for too much sake given to his groom (Kidō, #87, pp.105-106; Keene, pp.74-75).

14. The other six kinds of persons who make bad friends are: the man of lofty position, the young man, the man of robust constitution, the fierce soldier, the liar, and the miser (Kidō, #117, p.134; Keene, p.99).

reconsider all his traditional beliefs. The *Tsurezuregusa* praises the virtue of frugality and the warm-hearted nature of military rulers like Hōjō Tokiyori (1227-63) (Kidō 1977, 184, 215, and 216), the practical way of thinking of a conspirator like Hino Suketomo (1290-1332) (Kidō 1977, 152, 153, and 154), the sympathetic nature of the holy man Gyōren, an incomparable soldier with a provincial accent (Kidō, #141), all of them considered until Kenkō's time barbarous people of the Eastern provinces and, accordingly, despised. Kenkō cannot ignore the changes occurring around him, and does not hesitate to present even those new phenomena in sharp contradiction to his most firm convictions, as in the case of the millionaire (daifukuchōja), whose wealth is supported by the belief that human life is eternal.¹⁵ Although a challenge to traditional philosophy, the man aiming at immediate gain is a reality which cannot be overlooked in an age where gold can no longer be compared to iron in its many uses (Kidō 1977, #122, p.139; Keene 1981, p.105), an observation predating three centuries Saikaku's praise of money.

In his attempt to accord dignity to this world and to human values, Kenkō replaced the traditional Buddhist Way (hotoke no michi) with more practical and up-to-date paths. Not only the Way of Poetry (uta no michi), which Shunzei and Teika had followed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but also the way of cabinetmakers (ki no michi) (Kidō 1977, #22, pp.43-44; Keene 1981, p.23), of tree-climbing (Kidō 1977, #109, p.127; Keene 1981, pp.92-93),

15. Kidō, #217, pp.227-229; Keene, pp.178-180. In this portrait of a millionaire, Kenkō offers the explanation that an important condition necessary for the preservation of one's wealth is the abandonment of all sorts of desires. Kenkō here plays with a Buddhist principle in order to justify an anti-Buddhist behavior. This helps him to explain the existence of wealth in a Buddhist framework, stressing the fact that, if a man with money cannot satisfy his desires, he is exactly the same as a poor man. In the final stage, poverty and wealth, having lost all distinction, are exactly the same.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

of driving a carriage (Kidō 1977, #114, p.131; Keene 1981, p.95), in a word the Way of Crafts or Worldly Ways (yorozu no michi) are now leading men to terrestrial enlightenment, since crafts, even the most humble, cannot be done outside of this world. "In any art to know the Way is a noble thing," says Kenkō at the end of a chapter praising some villagers from Uji, who were able to build a water-wheel which could turn perfectly (Kidō 1977, #51, pp.70-71; Keene 1981, pp.44-45). Kenkō is interested not so much in the crafts themselves, but rather in the promptness which can make of a common being an enlightened man (makoto no hito). A good example is given by the archery master who teaches the beginner never to hold two arrows while shooting, because it will make him rely on the second arrow and be careless with the first. He encourages the student to make every single arrow the decisive arrow, inviting him to assume a state of mind of deep concentration (Kidō 1977, #92, pp.110-111; Keene 1981, p.78). The wise use of every single moment preached by this master, and the perfect results reached in his art, makes him no different from a holy man like Hōnen (1132-1212), who is presented by Kenkō not as the champion of nenbutsu, in which Kenkō was not interested, but as the enlightened man who has mastered his art, reaching the sphere of a selfless absolute, complete tranquillity.¹⁶ At this point, the man practicing the Buddhist Way and the man following the Worldly Way become indistinguishable. According to Kenkō's message, men must approach this life with the same mental attitude as if they were pursuing the Way of Buddha, so that both body (mi) and mind (kokoro) can be

16. Kidō, #39, pp.59-60; Keene, p.36. It is interesting to observe that the Hōnen presented by Kenkō does not require total faith in the nenbutsu, characteristic more of Ippen than of Hōnen. The mistake confirms the fact that Kenkō was not interested in presenting Hōnen's theories on nenbutsu. Rather he wanted to portray Hōnen's mastery of religious problems. For Kenkō's interpretation of Hōnen, see Fujiwara 1970, pp.105-122.

Michele MARRA

brought to a state of peace. These two entities are extremely important for Kenkō¹⁷ who, in his attempt to stress the importance of considering outward appearances and inward realization as the same entity (Kidō 1977, #157, p.176; Keene 1981, p.139), reaches the point of using a single word, *shinjin*, i.e., mind and body, to define the balanced formative ingredients of a human being.

Only when you are freed from everything and turn to the Way will your mind and body (*shinjin*), unhindered and unagitated, enjoy lasting peace" (Kidō 1977, #241, pp.254-255; Keene 1981, p.200).

We have already seen what a broad meaning the word "way" has for Kenkō, whose goal was to teach men that happiness can be reached in this world, apart from the influence of any external power, if only we learn the correct use of time and the right approach to human life.¹⁸

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17. He writes: "What a waste of time it is for both parties when people sit down for a chat! Words multiply; the body (*mi*) becomes fatigued; the mind (*kokoro*) is agitated" (Kidō, #170, p.185; Keene, p.146). Again he says: "If you decide that you cannot very well ignore your worldly obligations, and that you will therefore carry them out properly, the demands on your time will multiply, bringing physical hardships (*mi mo kurushiku*) and mental tension (*kokoro no itoma mo naku*)" (Kidō, #112, p.129; Keene, p.94). Yet once more he states: "There is only one way to seek Buddhist enlightenment: to give your body a quiet life (*itoma aru mi ni narite*) and not to be concerned in your mind with worldly matters (*yo no koto o kokoro ni kakenu o*)" (Kidō, #98, p.116; Keene, pp.81-82).
18. "Even if a man has not yet learned the real (=Buddhist) Way, as long as he removes himself from his worldly ties, leads a quiet life, and keeps his mind pacified, free from any entanglements, he may be said to be happy, at least for the time being." Kidō, #75, p.95; Keene, p.67.

Semi-Recluses and Impermanence

CONCLUSION

We have seen how Chōmei was unable to give more than a very personal answer to the problem of impermanence (*mujō*), trying to justify his position as a man too much attached to his own art (*sūkimono*), still bound to worldly attachments, in spite of his religious faith which denounced all worldly attachments as obstacles on the way towards salvation. All his efforts were aimed at proving that poetry and music were a privileged realm when performed with single-mindedness, in much the same way as madness and solitude had been a means to salvation for those holy men (*hijiri*) whose enlightenment was unquestionable. Chōmei didn't look for an answer which could be shared by all human beings, most probably because he was still living under the severe fear of *mappō* and the direct influence of old Buddhism, particularly Genshin, which urged him to find a quick and personal solution from the point of view of faith and repentance.

For a more universal and practical solution to the problem of *mujō* we wait until Kenkō's time, when the decreasing tension and fear of *mappō* and the fresh contribution of new Buddhism which helped to diminish such a fear, allowed people to stress again the present life and to provide solutions grounded in the present reality. Kenkō, in spite of his strong ties with the old tradition, tried to explain that human beings have a value in themselves, and do not need to flee their nature, if only they know the correct use of their existences.

Glossary

aware あはれ

Chiteiki 池亭記

daifukuchōja 大福長者

Daihatsunehangyō 大般涅槃經

Daihōdō daijikyō 大方等大集月藏經

Eisho 永秀

Entairyaku 園太曆

Fujibawakashū 藤葉和歌集

fūryū fūga 風流風雅

Gendaiu 源大夫

Genpin Sōzu 玄實僧都

Genshin 源信

Michele MARRA

Gofukōen'indono
gohyakushu 後普光園院殿御百首
Go-Nijō 後二条
Gyōren 堯蓮
Gyōsenbō 行仙房
haji 恥
Heike monogatari 平家物語
hijiri 聖
Hino Suketomo 日野資朝
Hōjō Tokiyori 北条時頼
Hōnen 法然
Hōnichi 宝日
Hosshinshū 発心集
hotoke no michi 仏の道
Ichigonhōdan 一言芳談
inja no bungaku 隠者の文学
intonsha 隠遁者
Ippen 一遍
itoma aru mi ni narite 暇ある身になりて
Jakushin 寂心
Ji (sect) 時宗
Jikkishō 十訓抄
jiriki 自力
Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明
Kenkōhōshikashū 兼好法師歌集
ki no michi 木の道
Kichidaiu 橘大夫
Kindai yasainja 近代艶隠者
Kinsada 洞院公賢
Kō no Moronao 高師直
kokoro 心
kokoro no itoma mo naku 心の暇もなく
kokorozashi 志
kotowari 理
Kōyasankongō 高野山金剛
sanmiin hōnō waka 三味院奉納和歌
Kuninaga 邦良
kurōdo 蔵人
mappō 末法
mi 身
mi mo kurushiku 身も苦しく
Minamoto no Ienaga nikki 源家長日記
Minamoto no Yoriyoshi 源頼吉
Mo-ho chih-kuan 摩訶止観
mujō 無常
myōri 名利
Nairisenshuwaka 内裏千首和歌

Nihon Ōjō gokurakuki 日本往生極楽記
Nihonkoku genpō
zen'aku ryōiki 日本国現報善悪霊異記
Ogura 小倉
Ōjōyōshū 往生要集
sahyōe no suke 左兵衛佐
Senjūshō 撰集抄
setsuwa 説話
Shan-tao 善導
shinjin 心身
shitennō 四天王
shōbō 正法
Shoku-gennyōwakashū 続現葉和歌集
Shoku-goshūiwakashū 続後拾遺和歌集
Shoku-kokinshū 続古今集
Shoku-senzaiwakashū 続千載和歌集
Shūi ōjōden 拾遺往生伝
Shunzei 俊成
Sukemichi 資通
Sukeshige 助重
sūkihijiri 数奇聖
sūkimono 数奇者
sun'in 寸陰
Tachibana Jun'ichi 橘純一
tadaima no ichinen ただ今の一念
Tadayoshi 足利直義
Tameyo 為世
Tameyoke uta-awase 為世家歌合
Tao-ch'ō 道綽
tariki 他力
Teika 定家
Tokimitsu 時光
tonseisha 通世者
Tsurezuregusa 徒然草
Urabe Kenkō 卜部兼好
uta no michi 歌の道
Yasuraoka Kōsaku 安良岡康作
yo no koto o kokoro
ni kakenu o 世の事を心につけぬを
Yokawa 横川
Yoriyoshi 頼吉
yorozu no michi 万の道
Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤
Yūimakyō 維摩經
zōbō 像法
Zoku honchō ōjōden 続本朝往生伝
Zoku shūi ōjōden 続拾遺往生伝

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