Visions and Perspectives

Ikkyū's Crazy Cloud Anthology: Then and Now

Sonja Arntzen, Professor Emerita, University of Toronto

Abstract: This paper is an adaptation of the talk I gave about my book, *Ikkyū and the Crazy Cloud Anthology*, at "The Dharma Ending Age: The Climate Crisis through the Lens of Buddhist Eschatology, Past and Present" conference at the University of British Columbia. My study and selected translations of the *Kyōunshū* 狂雲集, an anthology of poems in literary Chinese by the medieval Rinzai monk, Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481), was published in 1986, with a revised and expanded edition published in 2022 by Quirin Press. This paper explores the insights and shifts in perception that resulted from the opportunity to revisit the work of my youth at this late point in my life. Connecting to the theme of "The Dharma Ending Age," specifically the potential wisdom and solace of a Buddhist perspective when contemplating the end of existence on many planes, the focus of the paper will be on the poems from Ikkyū's later years, which were spent during the catastrophic Ōnin War (1467–1477). Ikkyū's experience as a refugee watching the world crumble around him are encapsulated in poems that are as poignant and instructive now as ever.

Keywords: Ikkyū , poetry, Zen, Buddhism, resilience

This paper is an adaptation of the talk I gave about my book, *Ikkyū and the Crazy Cloud Anthology,* at "The Dharma Ending Age: The Climate Crisis through the Lens of Buddhist Eschatology, Past and Present" at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The book, which is a study of the Japanese Zen monk Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394–1481) and his Chinese poetry in the *Kyōunshū* 狂雲集 [Crazy Cloud Anthology], was originally published in 1986 and then reprinted in a revised and expanded edition by Quirin Press in 2022. Thirty-six years

separate these two publications. My original intention had been to relate some insights gained from revisiting this work of my youth at this late point in my life. However, the theme of "The Dharma Ending Age", specifically the potential wisdom and solace of a Buddhist perspective when contemplating the end of existence on many planes, prompted me to focus on the poems from Ikkyū's later years, written during the catastrophic Ōnin War (1467–1477). Ikkyū's experience as a refugee watching the world crumble into chaos around him are encapsulated in poems that are as poignant and instructive now as ever. I should mention that the day of the talk coincided with the eve of Thanksgiving Sunday in Canada, an important religious and secular festival, because I will refer to that fact in the closing words of this paper.

A larger theme I also want to evoke, if only intermittently, is the connection between art, religion, and the resilience of human beings. I am thinking here of art in its widest possible meaning as explored by the biologist Ellen Dissanayake in her thought-provoking book, *Homo Aestheticus*. Dissanayake addresses the role of art in the biological survival of the human species. Her work takes as its point of departure the fact that no human society is without a form of art, be it cave drawings, beaded patterns on buckskin clothing, or patterned speech in ritual song. I think the climate crisis pushes us to consider the sweep of human evolution and how we got to this place where, who we are as a species, risks bringing us to extinction along with so many other forms of life. One of the roles of art (and religion) is to help us cope with crisis. If we cannot cope with the mental dimension of crisis—whether it is of a climatic, societal or personal nature—we are handicapped in dealing with its practical aspects. For Ikkyū, poetry was both a deeply Buddhist spiritual practice and a means for surviving difficult times. I will touch on how his poetry can serve as a specific example of Buddhist art as a response to crisis. But first a brief introduction to Ikkyū and his times is needed to provide a context for those poems.

Ikkyū was a Japanese Rinzai Zen[1] monk who lived during the turbulent

[1] Rinzai is the name of this school of Zen Buddhism in Japan, taken from the Japanese pronunciation of the founder of the school, the Chinese monk Linji 臨濟 (d. 866). Likewise, Zen is the Japanese pronunciation of Chan 禪, the Chinese word for meditation. In this paper, when speaking of Japan, Rinzai and Zen will be used. The founder of the school will be referred to in the Chinese pronunciation, Linji. When speaking of the Zen school in China, Chan will be used.

latter part of the Muromachi period (1336–c.1500). He is reputed to be the child of a lesser consort of the Emperor Go-Komatsu 後小松 (1377–1433) but his mother was slandered and banished from court just before Ikkyū's birth. At the age of six, he was placed in a Rinzai monastery; during this period, Zen monasteries served as boys' boarding schools, particularly for "surplus" boys. All literacy education within Zen monasteries was conducted through the medium of literary Chinese. Since literary Chinese fulfilled a role in Zen monasteries analogous to that of Latin in the medieval Christian church, Ikkyū's choice of Chinese for his own poetry was a natural one. Moreover, his whole life was spent within an institution that was intellectually and spiritually tied to the tradition of Chinese Chan. In other words, Ikkyū's upbringing was entirely within a China of the imagination. A small indication of this is that one of Ikkyū's pen names was Tōkai Ikkyū 東海一休 "Ikkyū of the Eastern Sea." Since Japan is to the east of China, this means that in a sense he located himself as though from within China.

Ikkyū grew up to be both an insider and outsider with respect to the monastic system of Rinzai Zen, which was at his time the largest and most influential Buddhist institution in the greater capital area and, indeed, the country as a whole. He assumed a respected place within the lineage of Daitoku Temple 大徳寺 and in the last years of his life served as abbot of Daitoku Temple itself. Daitoku Temple, however, had been demoted within the Rinzai monastic hierarchy in the early fourteenth century and then removed itself entirely from the upper ranks in 1431.[2] This meant that during Ikkyū's lifetime, Daitoku Temple was on the margins of the powerful institution. In fact, Ikkyū's choice to complete his training with Kasō 華叟 (1352–1428) of the Daitoku lineage, who was preserving the ascetic style of early Zen, was a conscious move to the periphery. Moreover, after Kasō's death, Ikkyū's relations with Daitoku temple were often strained. Ikkyū only stayed temporarily at the main temple, preferring to live in small hermitages here and there while pursuing an itinerant lifestyle.

Ikkyū is often described as an eccentric and iconoclast, and one has only to look at the famous portrait of him housed in the Tokyo National Museum to understand that characterization.[3] The portrait is a preparatory sketch for a

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[2] Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*, 112–2, 125. See also Arntzen, *Ikkyū and the Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 13–4 (note that all citations from this work are taken from the 2022 revised and expanded edition).

[3] Interested readers may consult "The Zen Priest Ikkyu Osho" on the website of "e-Museum:

formal portrait and thus displays an engaging immediacy. He is unshaven, with grey stubble sprouting on his head; his penetrating yet troubled eyes stare out searchingly from a deeply wrinkled face. One feels a deep humanity in him. Perhaps this is what attracted so many of the artists of the period to study Zen with him, including the Noh dramatist Komparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405–1470), *renga* poet Sōchō 宗長 (1448–1532), and tea ceremony founder Murata Shukō 村田珠江 (1423–1502). In his role as mentor to artists, Ikkyū was at the forefront of the cultural process by which Zen and the Japanese arts became fused.

The Muromachi period is known as a dark age of political instability. The imperial court as the civil branch of government had almost no power, and even the *bakufu* 幕府, the military branch of government which held control over all matters of state, was frequently riven by conflict between rival warrior factions. Nonetheless, throughout the period, agricultural production expanded, cash-based commerce emerged, and new artistic and intellectual currents from China inspired a cultural efflorescence. The Rinzai Zen monastic institution was the conduit and focal point for new developments in painting, architecture, garden design, and *kanshi* 漢詩 ("sinitic poetry"). Zen Buddhism had never before and would never again play such a powerful cultural role in Japanese culture. But the reach of the Rinzai Zen institution was not limited to artistic matters. Generously patronized by the warrior government, the large Rinzai Zen monasteries provided diplomatic and financial services to that government. In return, monasteries were given a near monopoly on the enormously lucrative trade with Ming China. In a tirade Ikkyū wrote against the Rinzai Zen institution's focus on financial gain and the attraction this had for his fellow disciples at Daitoku Temple, he included nearly fifty poems using the same rhyme scheme, zen 銭 [money], sen 船 [boats], and zen 禅 [Zen].[4] The major Zen monasteries ploughed the profits from the commerce with China back into moneylending and sake-brewing. The Rinzai monastic institution at this time resembled nothing so much as a modern corporation with diversi-

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National Treasures & Important Cultural Properties of National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, Japan 重要文化財," https://emuseum.nich.go.jp/detail?langId=en&webView=&content_base_id=100278&content_part_id=000&content_pict_id=0.

[4] This was a collection of poems and prose pieces entitled, *Jikaishū* 自戒集 [Self-Admonition]. The text is included in Nakamoto, *Kyōunshū* [Crazy Cloud Anthology], 349–78. See also Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 21–2.

fied financial interests. The warrior government came to rely on the immense wealth of the monasteries as though on a bank. Centralized warrior power and the wealth and influence of the Rinzai Zen monastic system, however, were both severely diminished by the Ōnin War 応仁の乱 (1467–1477). This pointless, destructive war was fought mainly in central Kyoto, where it razed all the grand temples and mansions to the ground. It ended with no winners and spread smaller conflicts to other regions of the country, a prelude to the hundred years of civil war that ensued from roughly 1500 to 1600. The poems of Ikkyū presented in this paper will mainly be from the years leading up to and during the Ōnin War.

Before going on to the poems, a few words about the two editions of the book and the source of my initial interest in Ikkyū are in order. I first heard about Ikkyū by taking a course in Japanese literature in translation at UBC in 1965. This fact makes it particularly appropriate that the talk on which this paper is based was delivered at UBC, the very place where the research was first inspired. Majoring at the time in French literature, I took the course on sheer whim, but I feel there was some hint of karmic predestination in the fact that the course was taught by Katō Shūichi 加藤周一 (1919–2008).

Katō joined the teaching staff at UBC in 1960, the year before the Asian Studies Department was officially established. Originally trained as a doctor, Katō left medicine shortly after the war to become a professional writer, publishing essays in major Japanese journals and newspapers. A polyglot who was equally at home in French, German, and English, by the late 1950s he was recognized as a leading spokesperson for the postwar generation in Japan. Katō was new to teaching pre-modern Japanese literature. During his period at UBC, Katō was re-evaluating his understanding of the entire Japanese tradition largely through the lens of literature. The insights he gained through teaching Japanese literature outside of Japan were published first as a long series of weekly articles in the Mainichi newspaper, then gathered into book form in 1975 as *Nihon bungakushi josetsu* 日本文学史序説 [An Introduction to the History of Japanese Literature], which was translated into English and published in three volumes from 1979 through 1983 as *A History of Japanese Literature*.[5] The view of premodern Japanese literature that Katō developed differed in many

[5] Katō, *Nihon bungakushi josetsu* [An Introduction to the History of Japanese Literature].

respects from traditional *kokubungaku* 国文学 [Study of the National Literature] in Japan.[6] For example, in his survey course on Japanese literature, Katō delivered two lectures on Ikkyū and his poetry in Chinese, despite the fact that poetry in Chinese by Japanese authors had been firmly excised from National Literature Studies in the postwar period and that there were as yet almost no translations of Ikkyū's Chinese poems in English.

When I signed up for Katō's course, I was unaware of his reputation and influence in Japan, nor of how original his perception of Japanese literature was. But finding every single lecture to be a revelation that opened up new vistas in the human experience, I became fascinated by Japanese literature as a whole. When Katō came to the lectures on Ikkyū, I was utterly enthralled. His poetry seemed so different from the rest of the tradition. Here was a poet of bold expression and powerful emotions; someone—a Zen monk no less!—who loved passionately, got angry, and protested the ills of his time. In the 1960s, these qualities made Ikkyū seem approachable and his poetry relevant to the contemporary world. I became convinced that someone had to translate this poet's work and let his voice be heard as an authentic part of Japanese literature. Since I had also begun studying Japanese language on the same whim that had brought me into the literature course, I went up to Katō after the second class and—with a naiveté aptly captured by the Japanese proverb, "the blind do not fear snakes,"—asked: "If I work very hard, might I be able to translate Ikkyū's poetry?" Katō smiled and replied, "It will take you a while." That was 1966 and it took twenty years until the first edition of the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* was published by the University of Tokyo Press, by which time I had ended up a university professor. It is no exaggeration to say that the encounter with Professor Katō and, through him, with Ikkyū shaped the rest of my life.

The original edition of the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* had been out of print for about thirty years when I was approached by Quirin Press to do a revised and expanded version. I had been intending to get the work reprinted ever since regaining the copyright, so the invitation was welcome, especially accompanied by the opportunity to improve the work. When I started to work on Ikkyū's

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[6] For an overview in Japanese of Katō's research on pre-modern Japanese literature and its influence internationally, see Arntzen, "Katō Shūichi no Nihon koten bungaku kenkyū [Katō Shūichi's Research on Classical Japanese Literature: A Personal View of its International Influence]."

poetry, there was very little secondary material on the *Kyōunshū* in Japanese, let alone in other languages. With the publication of the annotated edition of the *Kyōunshū,* two volumes in the *Ikkyū Oshō Zenshū* 一休和尚全集*,* in 1997, commentary on all the poems in the *Kyōunshū* became available for the first time.[7] Upon carefully rereading the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* after so many years had gone by, I was relieved to see that the bones of the work still held, but there were many improvements to be made in the translations, particularly in the identification of allusions which can change everything in meaning. I will relate one striking example of this in the presentation of the poems. There were also some subtle shifts in my perception of Ikkyū, one of which I will also mention in the next section.

Now back to the Muromachi period on the eve of the Ōnin War. As mentioned earlier, the Rinzai Zen monasteries were heavily invested in money-lending, something that had begun as a practice of charity, like the micro-loans to the poor by some modern non-governmental organizations, but the Rinzai monasteries succumbed to the temptation of charging usurious rates of interest. The years leading up to the Ōnin War were troubled by bad weather, crop failures, and the economic problems that ensue from such events. Farmers and townspeople suffering from crushing debt staged riots demanding forgiveness of debts, *tokusei* 德政 [Acts of Grace], and the large Zen monasteries were often the targets of incendiary attacks accompanying the riots. This is the background to this first poem by Ikkyū entitled "Acts of Grace."

Poem 287[8]
Robbers never strike poor houses.
One man's wealth is not wealth for the whole country.
I believe that calamity has its origin in good fortune.
You lose your soul over 100,000 pieces of copper.

賊元來不打家貧
孤獨財非萬國珎

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7 Hirano and Kageki, eds., "Kyōunshū."

8 All translations of Ikkyū's poems are from Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*. They can be located in that volume by the poem number. The poem numbers also correspond with those in the Hirano and Kageki annotated edition of the *Kyōunshū*.

信道禍元福所復
青銅十萬失靈神

zoku wa ganrai ie no hinnaru o utazu
kodoku no zai wa mankoku no chin ni arazu
shinzuraku wazawai wa moto fuku no fukusuru tokoro o
seidō jūman reishin o shissu

This poem is unusually self-explanatory, but I will take the opportunity to mention that the Quirin edition of the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* includes the romanized text for all the poems. Readers of Chinese will see that the sound of the poems in the Japanese reading are very different from what they would be in Chinese. When I gave a lecture about Ikkyū's poetry at an artist's cooperative in Vancouver in 1976, a poet in the audience asked how Ikkyū would have read his own poems aloud. At the time, I could not answer the question well. The romanization of *kanshi* 漢詩 (poems in literary Chinese by Japanese authors) is based on what is known as *kundoku* 訓読 [reading in the native way], a traditional method of translating Chinese grammar into Japanese grammar. But there are many different styles of performing this translation and I thought it was impossible to know how Ikkyū himself would have done it. Then, when I was studying in Kyoto from 1976 to 1978, one of my mentors, Hirano Sōjō, gave me a photocopy of the oldest manuscript of the *Kyōunshū,* one that bears a signature of Ikkyū himself and includes the diacritical marks for many of the poems, indicating how the *kundoku* reading should be performed. This manuscript revealed that the *kundoku* reading provided by modern scholars of Ikkyū quite closely follows the original style of his time. Thus, the romanized versions now included in the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* allow the reader to get some sense of how Ikkyū would have read his poems aloud.[9]

The next two poems deal with the famines preceding the Ōnin War. They are two of three poems under the title, "Second Year of the Kanshō Era (1461)—Starvation."

[9] The romanized text for this poem was read aloud during the talk and may be heard in the recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5Rj8NcMibI.

Poem 640
In the years of Kanshō, countless people dead,
Ancient spirits caught on the Wheel of Transmigration, ten thousand eons.
In the Nirvana Hall, there is no repentance,
One still prays for long life and endless spring.

寛正年無數死人
輪廻萬劫舊精神
涅槃堂裏無懺悔
猶祝長生不老春

Kanshō no nen musū no shinin
rin'esu bangō kyū seishin
nehandō ri sange naku
nao chōsei furō no haru o iwaeri

The Nirvana Hall was the name for the infirmary in a Zen monastery. Here Ikkyū contemplates the truth of the self-centeredness of physical existence. While expressing compassion for the countless victims of starvation caught in the endless turning of the wheel of transmigration, he recognizes the irony that when physically ill oneself, one's first impulse will be to pray for one's own survival.

Poem 641
Extreme pain of hunger and cold oppressing one body,
Before my eyes—a hungry ghost, before my eyes—a man.
Within the burning house of the Triple Sphere, a five-foot frame:
This is ten billion Mount Sumerus of suffering.

極苦飢寒迫一身
目前餓鬼目前人
三界火宅五尺體
是百億須彌苦辛

gokku no kikan ishin ni semari
mokuzen no gaki mokuzen no hito

sankai no kataku goshaku no tai
kore hyakuoku no Shumi no kushin nari

This poem reminds us that one person's physical suffering, whether from hunger or illness, is itself a universe of suffering. Both of these poems bear empathetic witness to the suffering of others. Sometimes that is all one can do, and it remains today as important a practice for keeping in touch with the first Noble Truth of Buddhism as it was in Ikkyū's time.

The next poem shows a lighter side of Ikkyū's expression in poetry and was written the year before the Ōnin War broke out.

> The thirteenth day of the eighth month of the first year of Bunshō (1466), soldiers from the various provinces fill the capital. The members of my school do not know if it is peace or war. They might be called "mindless" clerics. Therefore, I composed a poem and instructed them with it, saying:
>
> Poem 648
> The world at war, all heaven, all earth, battle.
> The time of Great Peace, all heaven, all earth, are calm.
> Misfortune, misfortune, on the edge of a sword.
> The Path followers of the monasteries find the Path difficult to attain.
>
> 亂世普天普地爭
> 太平普天普地平
> 禍事禍事劍刃上
> 山林道人道難成
>
> *ransei ni wa futen fuchi arasoi*
> *taihei ni wa futen fuchi taira nari*
> *kaji kaji kenjin no jō*
> *sanrin no dōjin michi narigatashi*

The prose introduction plays with the double meaning of "no mind/mindless." Usually, in a Zen context, to be with '"no mind" is the desired goal, but in the face of crisis where a decision must be made on practical exigence, to be "mindless" is a serious handicap. This word play is then reiterated in the

final line, "Path followers" [道人 *dōjin*] is a synonym for monk, but the second "path" in the line can also mean a pathway to safety. One can imagine humour helped to console the minds of his followers at this difficult time.

When war actually broke out, Ikkyū's hermitage within the capital was burned in some of the first fighting. Ikkyū took refuge in a rural village, Takigi 薪, to the south of the capital where Daiō 大應 (1235–1308), the founder of the Daitoku lineage, had established a hermitage. That hermitage was in disrepair by Ikkyū's time, but he had rebuilt it, naming it, Shūon'an 酬恩庵 [Hermitage for Repaying the Favour (of having been taught)]. There, Ikkyū and his disciples found safe haven for the first three years of the war. Shūon'an also served as a kind of literary and artistic salon that welcomed artists and performers escaping the troubles. The next two poems can be dated to 1469 and were inscribed by Ikkyū on a portrait by the painter Bokkei 墨渓 (fifteenth century). The portrait depicts the Chan monk recognized as the Chinese patriarch of the Daitoku lineage, Songyuan Lingyin 松源靈隱 (d. 1202). The idea of "lineage" is especially important in the Chan/Zen tradition because of the concept of the direct transmission of mind from master to disciple. The key link is not a teaching that could be written in a book (although the *goroku* (Ch. *yulu*) 語録, "Records of the Sayings of a Master," are revered too), but rather an ineffable quality of mind that is thought to be passed down the generations of disciples. The Daitoku lineage traces itself back to Songyuan who taught Xutang 虛堂 (1185–1269). Xutang was the teacher of Daiō, just mentioned above, who received the transmission in China and brought it to Japan. Daiō became the teacher of Daitō 大燈 (1282–1337), the actual founder of Daitoku Temple. Of course, the Daitoku lineage also connects with several separate lineages that all go back to the Tang dynasty founder, Linji. Portraits of key masters in the lineage were used for devotional practice; to contemplate a master's image was to contemplate his mind. This painting of Songyuan is mentioned in the *Ikkyū Oshō Nempu* 一休和尚年譜 [Chronicle of Reverend Ikkyū], along with other paintings done by Bokkei at the same time.[10] These records show that artistic production continued to flourish wherever haven could be found.

[10] Sanford, *Zen-Man Ikkyū*, 108–9.

Poem 491
The Zen of Master Songyuan Lingyin
By breaking the rules held to principle, saved a few coins.
In my purse, not even a half penny saved—
This madman, rambling river to mountain, thirty years.

松源靈隱老師禪
破法攀條省數錢
囊中我没半文蓄
狂客江山三十年

Shōgen Rin'nin Rōshi no zen
hō o yaburi jō o yōzu shōsūsen
nōchū ni ware hanmon no takuwae nashi
kyōkyaku kōzan sanjūnen

Poem 492
Circumambulate, bow, burn incense,
Raise the whisk, sound the block, sit on the carved chair…
Where in all this is Rinzai's true transmission?
Ikkyū on the Eastern Sea rends his grieving guts.

巡堂合掌又燒香
堅拂拈槌座木床
臨濟正傳也何處
一休東海斷愁腸

jundō gasshō mata shōkō
juhotsu nentsui mokushō ni zasu
Rinzai no shōden mata izuko zo
Ikkyū Tōkai ni shūchō o dansu

The first poem praises the painting by treating it as a true representation of Master Songyuan. It encapsulates Ikkyū's vision of Songyuan as an unconventional master who lived a frugal life. The last two lines declare that Ikkyū has not only perpetuated Songyuan's values but has taken them to the

limit.[11] Then, the second poem reflects on the current situation of Rinzai Zen in Japan, charging that the formal practices listed in the first two lines have been emptied of the spirit of the school's patriarch Rinzai. Implicit in this criticism is the monastic institution's contribution to the political disaster engulfing the country by its preoccupation with wealth and political preference. Note that in the last line, Ikkyū identifies himself as on the edge of the Eastern Sea, physically in Japan but mentally standing in China, shoulder to shoulder with the patriarchs of the school.

A poignant detail of Ikkyū's inscription on this painting is that he dates it "Third Year of the Ōnin era." This date does not exist. Alarmed by the scale of the war, the court tried after two years to encourage peace by declaring a new era, Bunmei 文明 [Civilized Brilliance] ("Ōnin" had meant "Reciprocal Benevolence"). This was a time-honoured, if ineffectual, practice of mimetic magic by the imperial courts in both China and Japan, supported by the belief that by changing the name of an age, you might change its character. Yet the situation had become so chaotic that even a day's walk from the capital, most people were unaware that the era name had changed. And, indeed, the war continued to spread. By the autumn of 1469, it reached Takigi and Ikkyū had to flee again.

The next two poems record the experience of taking to the forest paths between the capital area and Nara as a refugee.

Poem 605
Such a hard going, hard to know how far I've come,
Mountains are a vast quietude, so the waters say.
Ten thousand miles, ten thousand scrolls of writing,
for the first time I taste Du Ling's poetic spirit.

行路難難知其幾
山是大寂水是謂
萬里路兮萬卷書
初知杜陵詩情味

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[11] For a more detailed analysis of this poem and the basis for Ikkyū's sense of identification with Songyuan, see Arntzen, "Chinese Community of the Imagination for the Japanese Zen Monk Ikkyū Sōjun 一休宗純 (1394-1481)," 74–7.

kōro nan sono ikubaku naru ka shirigataku
yama wa kore daijaku mizu wa kore iu
banri no ro bankan no sho
hajimete shirinu Toryō no shijō no aji

poem 606
Whether in a mountain spirit realm or celestial palace,
our nation is in the hands of villains, the roads impassable.
So I recalled Du Ling sprinkling flowers with tears,
autumn's scent, golden chrysanthemum, on earth an acrid wind.

或神仙境或天宮
家國凶徒路未通
因憶杜陵洒花淚
秋香黄菊地腥風

arui wa shinsankyō arui wa tenkyū
kakoku no kyōto ni michi imada tōsezu
yotte omou Toryō no hana ni sosogishi namida o
shūka no kōgiku chi no seifū

Du Ling, referred to in both poems, is another name for the Tang Dynasty poet, Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770). The escape through a wild landscape with ever-present danger has Ikkyū recall Du Fu's experience during the An Lushan Rebellion (755–763). The travails of the journey are relieved by a new and vivid appreciation of Du Fu's poetry. This is one of the things art does across time: link us empathetically to kindred spirits and thereby provide companionship and solace in our own time of darkness. The third line in the second poem makes a specific allusion to the third line in a poem by Du Fu, "Spring View," written while he was a prisoner in the rebel-occupied capital. Here is that poem:

The state crumbles, mountains and rivers remain.
The city in spring, grass and shrubs grow rankly.
Feeling the times, flowers sprinkle tears.
Lamenting separation, birds startle the heart.
The signal fires have burned continuously for three months;

A letter from home would be worth a myriad pieces of gold.
I scratch my white head, thinning the hair even more;
Soon there will not be enough to stand up to a comb.[12]

Du Fu is known for his expression of a deep but humble humanity, and the final couplet with its homely image of thinning hair on an old head exemplifies this well. Ikkyū was seventy-six when forced into homelessness on the road making his identification with Du Fu all the stronger.

While both of Ikkyū's poems seem simple on the surface, an allusion in the first line of second poem introduces a dialectical twist to the meaning of the poem. The allusion here is to Case 61 in the kōan collection, *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄 [Blue Cliff Record], which addresses in general the issue of a nation's condition. The phrase "mountain spirit realm" occurs in Case 61 as a metaphor for the enlightened state of a mountain ascetic. In this poem, the phrase simultaneously evokes the actual mountains through which Ikkyū is passing and an enlightened state of mind. I suggest that Ikkyū uses the phrase ironically here to convey that in the condition of a refugee, even an enlightened mind is no comfort; what does bring comfort is remembering Du Fu's words that transform a similar suffering into poetry.[13]

Ikkyū did reach the relative safety of the coastal area and, in 1470, he was invited by a disciple to live with him in a hermitage in Sakai.[14] The disciple is not identified in the records but may have been Tamagaki 玉垣, a merchant and lay follower. Sakai, now included in the western suburbs of present-day Osaka, was the hub of the China trade as well as noted for the manufacture of arms. It charted an independent course in the political turmoil of the period that was, for the most part, respected by the warring factions. It also had branch temples of all the major Rinzai monasteries due to the connection with the China trade. This same year, an unexpected event occurred in Ikkyū's life as recorded in the introduction to the next poem.

On the fourteenth day of the eleventh month, the second year of Bunmei

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12 Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 180.

13 For a fuller explanation of the complex interaction between the allusion in the poem and the content of Case 61 as a whole, see Arntzen, "Chinese Community of the Imagination," 78–81.

14 Sanford, *Zen-Man Ikkyū*, 109.

[1470], I traveled to Yakushidō and heard the blind girl's love songs. Accordingly, I made a poem recording the occasion.

Poem 541
I traveled leisurely to Yakushidō and rejoiced there.
A poisonous spirit swells in my belly;
I blush, not to be concerned about my hoary head.
Singing her heart out in the bitter cold, sad beats lengthen the night.

優遊且喜藥師堂
毒気更更是我腸
愧慚不管雪霜鬢
今盡嚴寒愁點長

yūyū shakisu yakushidō
dokuke benbentaru wa kore waga chō
gizansu sessō no bin ni kansezu
gin tsuki genkan shūten nagashi

This is the first dated poem to mention the blind entertainer Mori 森 (also known as Shinjo 森女) who figures in the *Crazy Cloud Anthology* as the paramour of Ikkyū's later years.

The phrase "poisonous spirit" alludes to a Tang dynasty story, well known at the time, about two star-crossed lover-monks, Liyuan, the elder, and Yuanze, the younger. Yuanze died, but on his death bed predicted that he would reappear thirteen years later at a certain place known to both of them. Liyuan kept the tryst and Yuanze appeared as a young cowherd, but he cautioned Liyuan not to come near, saying "there is a poisonous spirit in me; I am not a human being" and consoled his lover with a song of which the last two lines were:

I blush that you have come so far to see me;
Although my body is different, love lasts forever.[15]

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[15] Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 171–2. See also Yanagida, *Ikkyū: Kyōunshū no Sekai* [Ikkyū: The World of the Crazy Cloud Anthology], 105–9.

Alluding to this story allows Ikkyū to express ambivalence about his feelings toward the entertainer and receptiveness at the same time. An afterword to poem 542 indicates that Ikkyū was previously acquainted with Mori and seems to record the budding of a love affair between the elderly monk and the woman entertainer in the next year.

> I lodged for some years in a small dwelling in Takigi. The attendant Mori, having heard of my appearance and manner, already held feelings of affection toward me. I, too, knew of it but remained undecided until now, the spring of Shinbo [1471], by chance in Sumiyoshi I asked her about her feelings. She replied in the affirmative.

There are several poems in the anthology that seem to indicate that Ikkyū and Mori lived together during this chaotic period. The poems speak of moving from place to place and suffering from insecurity,[16] even the threat of starvation, as in the following poem and prose introduction:

> My blind attendant Mori has strong feelings of love; she has refused to eat and may die. Out of an excess of pain and sorrow about it, I have made some poems.
>
> Poem 531
> Baizhang's hoe extinguished the need for alms,
> With rice money, the Old King of Hell has never been liberal.
> The blind girl's love songs shame Pavilion Master,
> On Chu's Terrace, rain at sunset drip drop drop.
>
> 百丈鋤頭信施消
> 飯錢閻老不曾饒
> 盲女艷歌咲樓子
> 楚臺暮雨滴蕭蕭

[16] See poem 533, which describes Mori traveling to performances, and and poem 539, which records Mori having to borrow a paper cloak from a village monk when the weather turned cold. Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*.

Hyakujō no jotō shinse kie
hansen Enrō katsute yurusazu
mōjo no enka Rōshi o warau
Sōdai no bo'u teki shō shō

The first allusion in this poem is to the Tang Master Baizhang 百丈 (749–814), who is credited with establishing the rule at Chan monasteries: "a day of no work is a day of no eating." Chan monasteries were the first Buddhist monasteries to incorporate farming of vegetables into monastery life, which liberated them from the exclusive reliance on alms for the sustenance of the community. It is to this which Ikkyū refers ironically, because as refugees on the road, Ikkyū and Mori have no recourse to growing food.

This poem contains the example mentioned at the beginning of this paper where failure to recognize an allusion results in a complete miscomprehension of the poem. It occurs here in the third line with the proper noun "Pavilion Master." When I first translated this poem, I took the characters rōshi 樓子 to mean "pavilion girls," another word for female entertainers, since establishments of "wine, women and song" in China were usually two-storey pavilions with the women living and offering entertainment on the second floor. The commentary to this poem provided by Hirano Sōjō in volume 1 of the Ikkyū Kyōunshū edition identifies the correct allusion to the following story of an eccentric monk recorded in the *Wu Deng Hui Yuan* 五燈會元 [Combined Sources for the Five Lamps] in 1252.[17]

> Pavilion Master [Louzi]: It is unknown from whence he came, and his actual name has been lost, but one day when this man was wandering through a marketplace, he stopped to adjust his gaiters in front of a wine pavilion. From up in the pavilion, he heard someone singing: "Since you have no heart, I might as well give mine up too." Suddenly experiencing true enlightenment, that man therefore took the sobriquet "Pavilion Master."[18]

Ikkyū identified with this Pavilion Master to the extent that he borrowed the

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17 Hirano and Kageki, eds, "Kyōunshū," 550.

18 Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 118. Original text, *Dainippon zoku zōkyō,* X 1565.6:c08.

sobriquet as one of his own. So, in this poem, Pavilion Master means Ikkyū himself. My earlier translation for this line was: "The blind girl's love songs, laughed at by the brothel girls," but with the correct meaning of Pavilion Master, it becomes "love songs laugh at / mock Pavilion Master," which expresses Ikkyū's sense of shame that Mori shows the greater fortitude and selflessness by refusing to eat so that he can survive.

In the last line, Chu's Terrace calls up a legend celebrated in an early prose poem about a former king who had a dream when he was on an outing to Chu's Terrace on Wushan 巫山, "Sorceress Mountain," that the goddess of the mountain came and slept with him. When, in the morning, he wanted her to stay, she said, "In the morning, I am the cloud; in the evening, I am the rain."[19] "Cloud-rain" thus became a euphemism for physical love. Here it evokes the love between Ikkyū and Mori in a sad minor key.

Ikkyū reused the third line of this poem in another poem inscribed on a portrait of himself and Mori that was presented in 1471 to his follower Tamagaki, a layman and merchant in Sakai who was mentioned earlier as the possible provider of shelter to Ikkyū in 1470.[20] This is an extraordinary portrait, perhaps the only example in existence of a formal portrait of a Zen master with his lover.[21] Ikkyū's image is set within a darker circle. This is a style of formal portraiture known as *ensō* 圓相 [Circle image], in which only the upper torso is rendered. He wears formal robes, but his head and chin show the familiar stubble of the Bokusai sketch. The head is presented in three quarters view, but the eyes do not stare out at the viewer, as in the sketch, but rather gaze slightly downwards. Beneath him, the full figure of Mori is depicted in formal seated position on a tatami mat, her shoulder drum beside her on the right, her tapping cane just on her left partially covered by her robe. A poem in Japanese by Mori is inscribed by Ikkyū in the space around her figure. In the phonetic script, it says:

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19 Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 180.

20 Terayama, *Ikkyū Bokuseki* [Collection of Ikkyū's Calligraphy Works], 72.

21 For a reproduction of the portrait, see the frontispiece (black and white photo only) in Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, as well as in Terayama, *Ikkyū Bokuseki*, 72–3, with enlarged details. It is also featured on the website of the Masaki Museum where the portrait is held, http://masaki-art-museum.jp/collection/collection_open.html?cn=23.

Sleep of yearning,
on this bed of sorrow sleeping,
I float, I sink,
but for tears
there is no consolation.

omoi ne no
uki ne no toko ni
ukishizumu
namida narade ha
nagusami mo nashi

Ikkyū inscribed his poem above his portrait:

Within the circle appears a whole self,
The painting expresses Xutang's true features,
The blind girl's love songs shame Pavilion Master
One song before the blossoms equals ten thousand years of spring.

大圓相裏全身現
畫出虛堂面目真
盲女艷歌笑樓子
花前一曲萬年春

daien sōri zenshin o gensu
Kidō no menboku no shin o kakidasu
mojo no enka Rōshi o warau
kazen no ikkyoku bannen no haru

The first two lines declare Ikkyū's identification with the Rinzai lineage. Xutang, as mentioned earlier, was the Song master who marks the point in the Rinzai lineage where the transmission passed from China to Japan. Ikkyū's colophon and signature to the poem also emphasize his position within the Daitoku line, although since Daitoku Temple itself had been reduced to a pile of ashes at this point in the Ōnin War, Ikkyū speaks of himself as "formerly" of Daitoku Temple:

> Old monk Jun Ikkyū of the Eastern Sea, formerly of Daitoku Temple and Seventh Generation Descendant of Master Xutang Tianze, composed this himself and gave it to Lay Disciple Tamagaki.[22]

Thus Ikkyū claims the painting as a portrait of an authentic master with the confidence and verve expected of Zen masters. But then the third line, repeated from the poem about facing starvation, declares his humility toward the blind entertainer. In the same way that Ikkyū expresses respect for the secular poems of Du Fu, this line praises the transcendent quality of Mori's songs and performance art. The final line expresses joy, the simple joy of loving in the eternity of the moment of one song. Ikkyū's poem is more positive than Mori's. In fact, Ikkyū's love poems to Mori are all rare examples in Japanese literature of the expression of happiness in love. The blues is much more the norm in Japanese love poetry.[23] In that sense, Mori's poem fits within the tradition. Given the uncertain and dangerous times they were living through, her expression of sorrow seems natural, too.

What are we to make of this body of love poems in Ikkyū's oeuvre? It is one thing to challenge dualistic thinking with iconoclastic statements, as Ikkyū does in many other poems, but it is quite another to speak so unashamedly of attachment. It is a paradox because the enlightened man should be beyond all attachment. On this question, I would like to quote from the afterword I wrote for the reprint of the Ikkyū book.

> …this time through the anthology, I was struck forcefully by the ecstasy and the ache that radiates from so many of Ikkyū's poems with sexual desire at their core. In my seventies myself now, the same age when Ikkyū was writing his ardent poems for the blind singer Mori, realizing how life-long this preoccupation was for Ikkyū, I am left with a feeling of wonderment verging on bewilderment.
>
> Katō Shūichi, in his forward to the first edition of this work, drew an analogy between Ikkyū and the poet John Donne, declaring that their "metaphysics of eros" did not have to wait for Freud. While working on

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[22] Terayama, *Ikkyū Bokuseki* [Collection of Ikkyū's Calligraphy Works], 72

[23] Arntzen, *The Kagerō Diary: A Woman's Autobiographical Text from Tenth-Century Japan*, 5–7.

these revisions, I kept feeling that Ikkyū had a kindred spirit in the singer Leonard Cohen, and not only because Cohen spent twenty years of his life meditating at the Zen monastery on Mt. Baldy. Cohen's posthumously released album, "Thanks for the Dance," sums up the two passions of his life, a thirst for spiritual enlightenment and an enchantment with love in all its forms but most of all in its physical expression. I felt the same sense of wonderment that I mentioned feeling about Ikkyū, when I saw that, for one of his posthumous messages to the world, Cohen should choose to record an encounter long ago in Santiago with a woman who appears to be a moon-lighting streetwalker. His last verse in that song directly addresses judgemental listeners and ironically apologizes for his own inability to make such judgements. With those lines, it seems to me that Cohen stands side by side with the Ikkyū who, toward the end of his life, takes the sobriquet "Dream Chamber" as "an old madman down on my luck advertising what I like."[24]

I will conclude with one more poem from the Mori series that reminds us that the concept of linear time, which is so important to the Christian and Muslim traditions and which gives rise to the very notion of apocalypse, is not central to Buddhism. Even the "Dharma Ending Age" is not really the end. In Buddhist cosmology, there were countless Buddhas before *Śā*kyamuni and there will be countless Buddhas in the future after Maitreya. One can sense how comforting this sense of cyclical time has been for Buddhists in the following poem entitled "A Vow Taken to Repay My Deep Debt to Lady Mori":

Poem 543
The tree budded leaves that fell, but once more round comes spring;
Green grows, flowers bloom, old promises are renewed.
Mori, if I ever forget my deep bond with you,
Hundreds of thousands of eons without measure, may I be reborn a beast.

木稠葉落更回春
長緑生花舊約新

[24] Arntzen, *Crazy Cloud Anthology*, 194.

森也深恩若忘却
無量億刼畜生身

ki shibomi ha ochi sara ni haru ni kaeri
en o chōji hana o shoji kyūyaku arata nari
Shin ya shin'on moshi bōkyakuseba
muryō okugō chikushō no mi naran

I also chose to conclude with this poem of gratitude to honor the day of the conference talk on which this paper is based, the eve of Thanksgiving Sunday—a holy day, holiday, fête—that has been learned and appropriated from the indigenous peoples of this North American continent. Surely, the cultivation of gratitude is also part of the transformation needed by humanity to overcome the crisis of survival our species faces today.

Abbreviations

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, see Takakusu and Watanabe, eds. in bibliography.
X *Dainippon zoku zōkyō*, see Maeda and Nakano, eds. in bibliography.

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