

but the holy man could not help noticing a nubile daughter. . . . The headman and his wife both seemed to be snoring. He heard a rustle and she was beside him. His hands were all over her . . . She was hot and eager . . .”

Vivid though such writing may be, in a manner scarcely possible with mere documentary prose, it is not until right at the end of the book, in the Postscript, that Mr. Statler tells us of these excursions into fiction. Using a translation of Gorai Shigeru's *Kôya Hijiri*, he writes, “I have dramatised the stories of historical figures such as Joyo, Chogen, Butsugen, Gyosho and Saigyo, and based on Gorai's work I have created fictional characters to represent hundreds of anonymous holy men.”

Mr. Statler is perfectly entitled to write historical fiction. Our objection is that he does not tell us when he is doing so. Fact melts without any warning into invention or speculation. We really do not know sometimes whether the incidents he describes or the literary works he quotes are genuine or not. For all we know they may have been invented by Mr. Statler for dramatic effect.

But he has given us a book about the Shikoku pilgrimage full of warmth and sympathy, and full of information which has not been assembled before. He makes us want, this very next spring, to take the time off to walk the nine hundred miles, and for this and for his very personal book, anyone concerned with religion in Japan must be grateful.

CARMEN BLACKER

*GRASS HILL: Poems and Prose by the Japanese Monk Gensei.* Translated by Burton Watson. Columbia University Press, New York, 1983; pp. xxxiii + 116 with introduction, translator's note, and appendix. ISBN 0-231-05606-0.

This slender volume contains a selection of translations from the literary work of the Nichiren priest Gensei (1623-1668), including eighty pages of poetry in Chinese, twenty pages of prose selections, and an appendix consisting of eleven Japanese *waka*. It is the latest in a series of translations from the Chinese and Japanese poets by Burton Watson, formerly professor of Chinese at Columbia University.

Gensei was born in 1623 and died after a long struggle against illness in 1668. Besides his copious religious and scholarly works on the Nichiren teachings, Gensei produced during his short lifetime a considerable body of literary works in both poetry and prose. While he has never been what one could call well known

even in his own country, he seems always to have had a small but highly appreciative following among the literati, and in this century, among scholars. His writings impress us with a sense of personal warmth, sincerity, and religious fervor.

Gensei, Dr. Watson states in a succinct and helpful introduction, emphasized the importance of *seirei* ("native sensibility") over mere imitation in literature, and stressed it as the source of poetical production. He quotes a late poem in which the poet writes:

Poems bring forth the best in one's inner nature (*seirei*); they're irrepressible—who can stop them? (p. xxv)

In a late prose piece, Gensei describes the concept of *seirei* in the terms of his religion, stating that "he who embodies *seirei* can become the master of all the ten thousand dharmas . . . purify the Buddha lands and bring enlightenment to all sentient beings" (p. xxv).

Gensei's view of poetry seems to have been influenced by Chinese poetic theories, especially those of a late Ming poet named Yüan Hung-tao (1568–1610), which stressed the personal and emotional aspects, as opposed to the formal, imitative aspect of poetic composition. True poetry is thus "that which gives expression to emotions that flow freely and irrepressibly from the heart of the writer."

Since "poetry that depends for its effectiveness principally upon musical effects or elaborate prosodic devices can seldom be translated with much success," the translator's standard for selecting the poems for translation was rather to seek those "with interesting content," which he found "most often among works that deal with the writer's personal experiences." I think that this is a sound policy, particularly so for a translator working from the Japanese or Chinese.

Dr. Watson's long experience as a scholar and translator of Chinese and Japanese literature has obviously stood him in good stead. His translations, as far as I can judge, are very successful. Having checked the entire work against the original text (a very time-consuming task, I might add, in the absence of any finding list), I did, however, find a few passages where I think the translation fails to render the original meaning adequately. I shall limit myself here to pointing out a few of these.

Take the first poem in the book, entitled (by the translator) "The Dream Fades Above the Peak of Mount Hiei":

*The dream fades above the peak of Mount Hiei;  
waking, I understand how to make the senses pure.  
In my dream I came on a couplet—  
the wording was lofty, the meaning new.  
And this I say to my friends:*

*don't think you can call me a fool.*  
 Not even knowing that truth is a dream,  
 how can you tell when a dream is true?

The meaning of the lines set above in italics should be:

In a dream I attained the summit of Mount Hiei,  
 and there felt my senses and the objects of my senses were purified.

...

Say nothing about this to the ignorant.

In the "Preface to the Poem on Ten Joys" (p. 74):

Now I have only this wish. *I have grown old living far off among these clouds and hills and in the course of this life I have at last attained enlightenment. In my next life, I must use this understanding of the Dharma realm to save as many living beings as I can.* That is the only thing that I desire now.

This I would render as:

May I be able to live to the last far off among these clouds and hills,  
 to finally attain supreme enlightenment in this life, and save as many  
 living beings as I can, taking the whole Dharma realm for my object.

From the Japanese *waka* in the appendix:

Tabi no sora	<i>The sky on a journey</i>
nani ka wabishiki	<i>looks somehow sad—</i>
yo o sutete	now that I've turned
idenishi mi ni wa	my back on the world,
furusato mo nashi	there's nowhere I call my home

The meaning of the first two lines is rather: "How can I be saddened/looking upon the sky on a journey?"

Another *waka* reads:

Oshikaranu	This body means nothing to me,
mi zo oshimaruru	but when I think of it
tarachine no	as a remembrance from one
oya no nokoseru	who meant so much,
katami to omoeba	my mother of the sagging breasts—

I suggest a more straightforward rendering:

This body means nothing to me  
 but how meaningful it becomes,

whenever I think of it as a remembrance  
from my beloved mother.

A word in passing on the translation of the *makurakotoba*, or "pillow words," which appear so frequently in Japanese *waka*. Generally speaking, *makurakotoba* are not so much descriptive as they are evocative of some emotion associated with the noun to which they are prefixed. I doubt if satisfactory results can be obtained from attempting to reproduce them literally in translation—their impact is felt too strongly in the poem, causing a distraction away from the main thought or imagery of what is in any case a brief and delicate poetic statement. If they are to be translated at all, would it not be preferable to use some word or phrase to suggest the desired emotion or nuance, rather than to declare openly the literal meaning of the *makurakotoba*?

The book is finely produced, but marred by a number of misprints. To mention one, which might cause confusion: the romanization of the Japanese title of the text itself is given as *Honchū Sōzanshū*; it should be *Hyōchū Sōzanshū*.

SAKAMOTO HIROSHI

*THE MIRROR MIND: Spirituality and Transformation.* By William Johnston, S. J. Harper and Row, New York, 1981; pp. 192. ISBN 0-06-064197-5.

This is perhaps the author's best work to date among the volumes he has produced on the subject of Christian and Buddhist ascetical or spiritual practice. It consists of a series of lectures given at Oxford University in the fall of 1981. Father Johnston is one of the most competent theologians in the important task of accurately and sympathetically interpreting Buddhist belief and practice for the educated Christian believer. This primary purpose of his lectures is not simply to inform Christians about Buddhism in some detached, theoretical manner; rather, they attempt something a good deal more ambitious and a great deal more difficult. They present some of the major themes of traditional Catholic mystical and spiritual theology and attempt to elucidate the many ways in which these ancient Christian teachings on the practices and stages of human and spiritual growth have deep and important parallels in Mahayana Buddhism. Some of these presentations come off much better than others. Their cumulative effect, however, is to add a dimension of credibility to both Christian and Buddhist paths by shedding important, new light on their many common methods and insights