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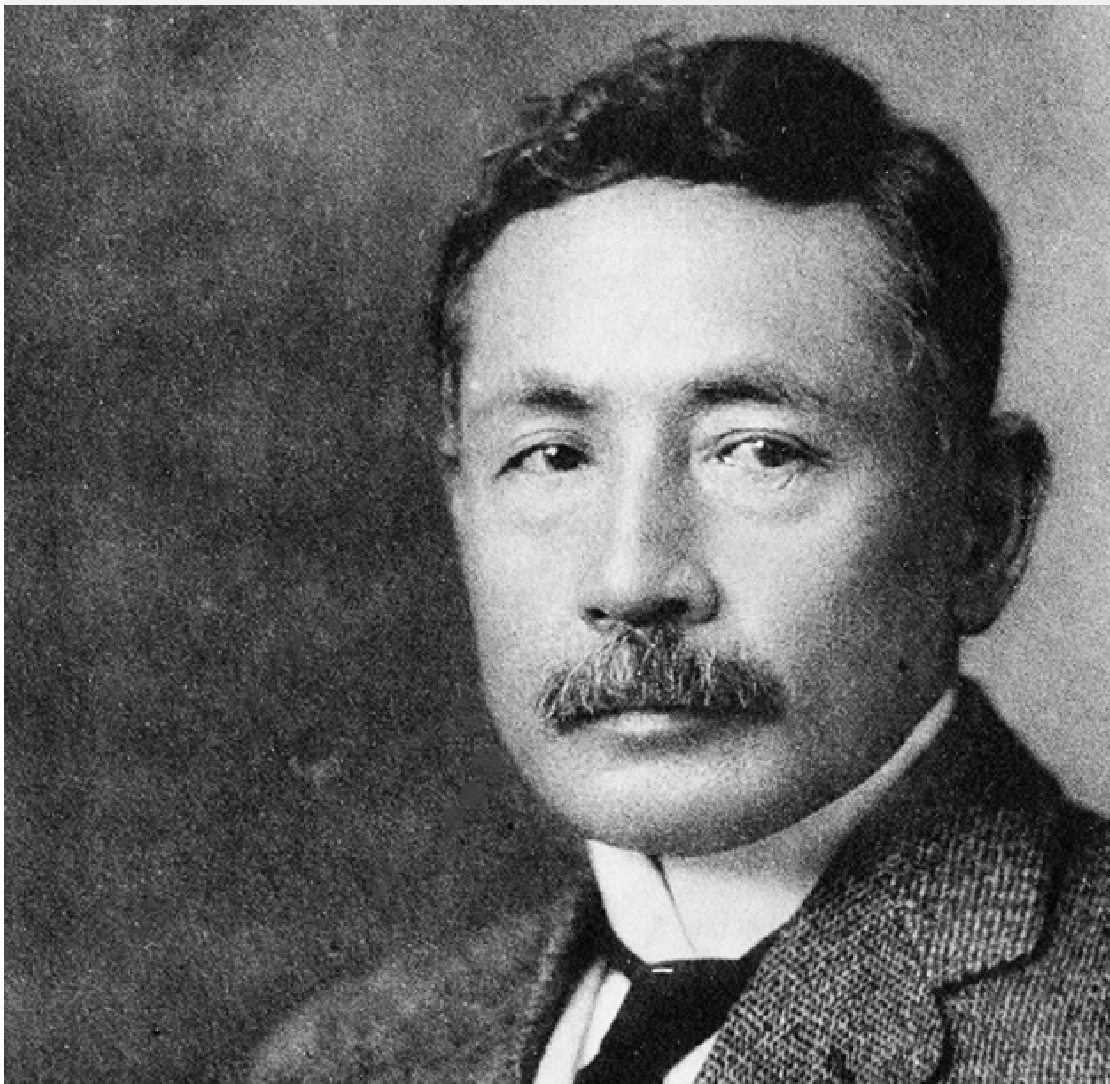
# Natsume Sōseki

## Collected Works



Series Fifteen

*The Collected Works of*

**NATSUME SŌSEKI**

(1867-1916)

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夏目漱石


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Version 1

***The Collected Works of***

# NATSUME SŌSEKI

*By Delphi Classics, 2025*

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*Collected Works of Natsume Sōseki*

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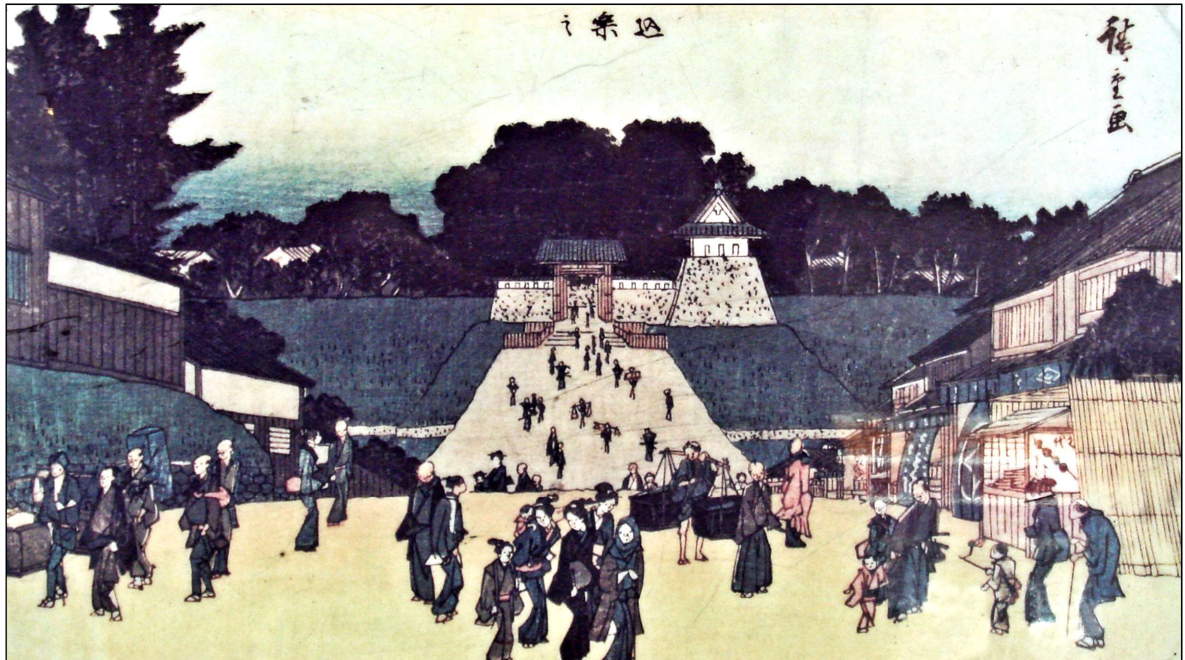
# The Translation



*'View of Kagurazaka and Ushigome bridge to Edo Castle' by Utagawa Hiroshige, 1840 — Natsume Sōseki was born on 9 February 1867 in the town of Babashita, Ushigome (present-day Kikui, Shinjuku, Tokyo).*

*Shinjuku City today*

# Hojoki (1891)

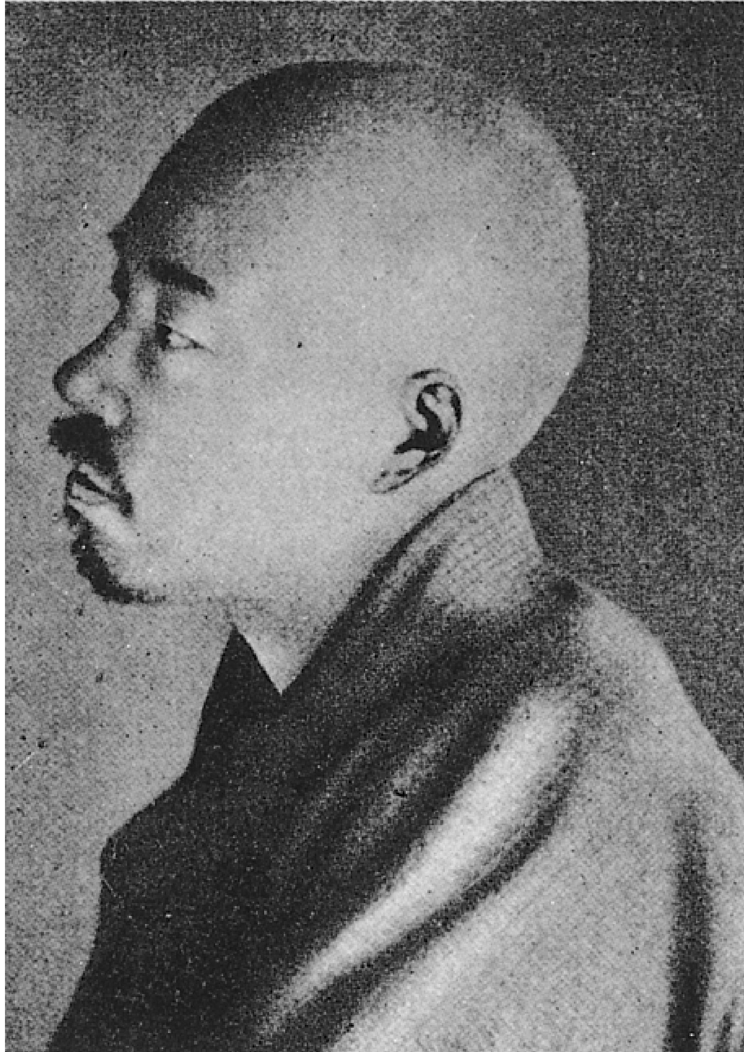
Natsume Kinnosuke was born in 1867 in the town of Babashita, Ushigome, Edo in present day Kikui, part of Tokyo. He was the fifth son of a powerful and wealthy village head, who handled most civil lawsuits at his doorstep. Natsume began his life as an unwanted child, born to his mother when she was forty years old and his father fifty-three; he already had five siblings. Having five children and a toddler had created family insecurity and was deemed by some a disgrace to the family. A childless couple, Shiobara Masanosuke and his wife, adopted young Natsume in 1868 and raised him until the age of nine, when the couple divorced. He returned to his biological family and was welcomed by his mother, although he was regarded as a nuisance by his father. His mother died when he was fourteen and his two eldest brothers died in 1887, increasing his lack of confidence in his family environment.

Sōseki attended the First Tokyo Middle School (now Hibiya High School), where he was inspired by Chinese literature, hoping one day to become a writer. However, his family disapproved strongly and when Sōseki entered the Tokyo Imperial University in September 1884, it was with the intention of becoming an architect. Although he preferred Chinese classics, he started studying English at that time, feeling that it might prove useful to him in his future career, as English was a necessity in Japanese college.

In 1887, Sōseki met Masaoka Shiki, the master haikuist of his generation, who would prove to be an important friend, giving him encouragement on the path to becoming a writer. Shiki tutored him in the art of composing haiku. From this point on, he began signing his poems with the epithet *Sōseki*, a Chinese idiom meaning 'stubborn'. In 1890 he entered the English Literature department and quickly mastered the English language. The following year he produced a partial English translation of the classical work *Hōjōki* upon request by his English literature professor James Main Dixon.

Often titled in English as *An Account of My Hut* or *The Ten Foot Square Hut*, *Hōjōki* is an important, though short work of Japan's early Kamakura period (1185-1333). It was composed in 1212 by Kamo no Chōmei, a poet of the *waka* form (including verse often composed in a 5-7-5-7-7 metre). *Hōjōki* depicts the Buddhist concept of impermanence (*mujō*) through the description of various disasters such as earthquakes, famine, whirlwinds and conflagration that befall the people of the capital city Kyoto. Chōmei, who in his early career worked as court poet and was also an accomplished player of the biwa and koto, became a renunciant in his fifties and moved farther and farther into the mountains, eventually living in a 10-foot square hut located at Mt. Hino. *Hōjōki* has been classified both as belonging to the *zuihitsu* genre and as Buddhist literature. Now considered as a Japanese literary classic, it remains an important part of the Japanese school curriculum.

Sōseki was the first to translate the poem into English; in fact, it was one of the earliest works of classic Japanese literature to be translated into a European language. Sōseki's professor, Dixon, consequently came out with his own translation, which was largely based on Sōseki's work.



*Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) was a Japanese poet, author and literary critic in Meiji period Japan. He was an important friend to Sōseki, inspiring him to follow his dream to become a professional writer.*

*The thirteenth century author Kamo no Chōmei by Kikuchi Yōsai, c. 1850*

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*Early Kamakura copy of 'Hōjōki', said to have been handwritten by Kamo no Chomei*

# INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

*8th December, 1891*

THE LITERARY PRODUCTS of a genius contain everything. They are a mirror in which everyone finds his image, reflected with startling exactitude; they are a fountain which quenches the thirst of fiery passion, refreshes a dull, dejected spirit, cools the hot care-worn temples and infuses into all a subtle sense of pleasure all but spiritual; an elixir inspiring all, a tonic elevating all minds. The works of a talented man, on the other hand, contain nothing. There we find fine words, finely linked together and fine sentiments, also finely interposed. But then they are only set up for show. Like a mirage, they strike us for a moment with astonishment, but soon slip out of our mental vision because of their unsubstantiality. We may be amused by them just for an hour or so, then dispense with them forever without incurring any loss to our intellectual storehouse.

Again there is a third class of literary production which stands half-way between the above two and which will perhaps be most clearly defined by the name 'works of enthusiasm.' Books of this class are not meant for all men in all conditions, as are those of a genius, nor are they written from the egotistic object of being read, nor as a pastime of leisure hours, as those of a talent, but they are the outcome of some strong conviction which satiating the author's mind finds its outlet either in the form of a literary composition or in that of natural eloquence. They are not the result of forced labour or of deliberate artifice, but are feats accomplished, so to speak spontaneously. At their best where the conviction is so profound as to be raised to the level of truth itself, and the passion attains a white heat, they are in no wise separated from the works of genius. Even in their worst, they cannot fail to attract some readers whose view of life runs in the same groove as the author's, nor can they cease to be a source of pleasure to those whose temperaments happen, in certain points, to sympathize with his. For whether they be short or long, elaborate or succinct, they are invariably earnest in tone. And earnestness is that quality which carries us along with it, whether we will or not.

Writers of this class are however subject to a certain disadvantage from which the other two are generally free. When their thoughts are too uncommon or too abstruse, they cannot, as a matter of fact, have many readers. The intellectual flames, too fine and subtile to catch the average mind, has (sic) no power, in this case, to kindle a spiritual fire in it, the appeal to whose common sense is a decided mark of popularity. In such cases, they are generally superseded by transient luminaries of minor dimensions and doomed to sink into oblivion, hiding that one talent 'lodged in them useless.'

Still popularity does not make a poet or an author, anymore than the average sentiment for the beautiful would make aesthetics. Paradoxical though it may seem, an author's real power is sometimes in inverse ratio with his popularity. For if he fails to appeal to mankind at large he may still appeal to a select few whose opinion is far more valuable than the applause of the multitude.

As in the case of intellect where to recognise a truth is not the lot of every man, though he be endowed with the same faculty of reasoning and the same form of understanding as others, just so in the province of literature, it does not lie within

every man's power to appreciate a work of high merit which seems at first sight to be meaningless at even repulsive. We may safely lay down the proposition that no one will deny the simple truth that two and two make four, but we doubt whether there is one in every ten who will consent to the statement that the world's onward course consists of the gradual unfolding of the Mundane Spirit. Nor would anyone except the cultured acknowledge the truth that space and time are not objective realities but only the necessary forms of subjective cognition. This difference between common sense and philosophy, may, to a certain degree, be stated as existing between common sense and literature. For, as M. Taine wisely remarks, under every literature lies a philosophy and a philosophy which is a mere skeleton, becomes a literature when clothed with flesh and blood. Common people who look only at the outward semblance are struck dumb with admiration, where it is shaped with such a skill as in the case of a great artist, and stand gazing on, until they forget to consider what a grim ungainly bony case is concealed within. But where both flesh and blood are scanty in quantity and are subordinated in treatment to the structure of the skeleton, so that its ugly frame may be seen through the skin, people are generally scared and will soon take to their heels. Only firm and robust minds can resist the momentary shock and find there something attractive; or persons with a peculiar bent of mind who find their likenesses reflected there, can truly sympathize with those seeming apparitions.

An apparition, possibly, the following piece may seem to most of us, inasmuch as only a few can nowadays resist its angry isolation and sullen estrangement from mankind, still fewer can recognise their own features reflected in it. Philosophical arguments too may be urged against the author's narrow-minded pessimism, his one-sided view of life, his complete renunciation of social and family bonds. With all that, the work recommends itself to some of us for two reasons: first for the grave but not defiant tone with which the author explains the proper way of living, and represents the folly of pursuing shadows for happiness, secondly for his naïve admiration of nature as something capable of giving him temporary pleasure, and his due respect for what was noble in his predecessors.

It is an inconsistency that a man who is so decidedly pessimistic in tendency should turn to inanimate nature as the only object of his sympathy. For physical environments, however sublime and beautiful, can never meet our sympathy with sympathy. We can not deny that we are sometimes inspired by her grandeur, — which however is not the case with Chōmei — but the inspiration comes only through Some mechanical influence as in the case of an electric shock acting powerfully upon our system and not through anything like spiritual communication which may exist between man and man. After all, nature is dead. Unless we recognise in her the presence of a spirit, as Wordsworth does, we cannot prefer her to man, nay we cannot bring her on the same level as the latter, as our object of sympathy. Man with all his foibles and shortcomings, has still more or less sympathy for his fellow creatures. Granting that love deepens where sympathy is reciprocal, we find no reason why we should renounce all human ties and sullenly fly to cold, unsympathetic nature as the only friend in the world, who is really harmless. Harmless she may be, but can never be affectionate!

In the second place, Chōmei forsook the world, because, he tells us, all earthly things are precarious in state, fortuitous in nature and therefore not worth while aspiring after. Why then did he look so indulgently upon nature which is not a jot less subject to change? Why did he not renounce her in the same breath with which he renounced life and property? It is still more unaccountable that such a professed misanthrope as Chōmei should find any interest in some particular individuals who

had gone before him. Be that as it may, however, we are not concerned merely with his inconsistencies, of which he has many.

In spite of these drawbacks, the author is always possessed with grave sincerity and has nothing in him, which we may can sportive carelessness. If he cannot stand critical analysis, he is at least entitled to no small degree of eulogy for his spotless conduct and ascetic life which he led among the hills of Toyama, unstained from the obnoxious influence of this Mammon-worshipping, pleasure-hunting ugly world.

Chōmei's view of life which has [been] implicitly mentioned above, may well be illustrated by a quotation from Shakespeare: —

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples, the great globe itself, Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve. And like this insubstantial pageant faded, Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff As dreams are made on and our little life Is rounded with a sleep."

Considering the particular social circumstances under which he lived, his peculiar turn of mind much hardened by his personal experiences as well as the strong influence which Buddhistic theology exerted upon his thought, it is not surprising he was irresistibly driven into an ethereal region where eternal mind calmly sits by itself, emancipated from all objects of ephemeral nature. Thus to him, to be up and doing, still achieving, still pursuing, seemed the greatest folly of all follies. Rather like 'the hermit of the dale' he might invite others: —

"Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forego; All earth-born cares are wrong: Man wants but little here below, Nor wants that little long."

Deeply impressed by the insecurity of life and property, he fled to nature. There among flowers and rocks, he quietly breathed his last. Let a Bellamy laugh at this poor recluse from his Utopian region of material triumph; let a Wordsworth pity him who looked at nature merely as objective and could not find in it a motion and a spirit, rolling through all things; let all those whose virtue consists of sallying out and seeking his adversary, turn upon him as an object of ridicule: for all that he would never have wavered from his conviction.

Of Chōmei's life a few sentences suffice to tell you all. He lived in the latter half of the twelfth century, and was the son of the rector of the Kamo temple in Yamashiro. His solicitations to succeed to his father's position being refused, he shaved his head in vexation and retired to the sequestered village of Ōhara. At the invitation by Sanetomo, he went to Kamakura and was a guest of that prince for a time. He spent in seclusion the remainder of his life in Toyama.

He was well acquainted with the art of composing Japanese verse. Many pieces of his are found in a collection called Choku-sen (Imperial selection). Besides the Hojio-ki, he wrote the Kei-gioku-shū, the Mumyo-shō, Hosshin-shū, Shiki-monogatari and others.

In rendering this little piece into English, I have taken some pains to preserve the Japanese construction as far as possible. But owing to the radical difference both of the nature of language and the mode of expression, I was obliged, now and then, to take liberties and to make slight omissions and insertions. Some annotations have also been inserted where it seemed necessary. If they be of the slightest use in the way of clearing up the difficulties of the text, my object is gained. After all, my claim as

regards this translation is fully vindicated, if it proves itself readable. For its literary finish and elegance, I leave it to others to satisfy you.

5th December, 1891.

K. Natsume

# TRANSLATION

## HOJIO–KI[1]

INCESSANT IS THE CHANGE of water where the stream glides on calmly: the spray appears over a cataract, yet vanishes without a moment's delay. Such is the fate of men in the world and of the houses in which they live. Walls standing side by side, things vying with one another in loftiness, these are from generations past the abodes of high and low in a mighty town. But none of them has resisted the destructive work of time. Some stand in ruins; others are replaced by new structures. Their possessors too share the same fate with them. Let the place be the same, the people as numerous as before, yet we can scarcely meet one out of every ten, with whom we had long ago a chance of coming across. We see our first light in the morning and return to our long home in the evening. Our destiny is like bubbles of water. Whence do we come? Whither do we tend? What ails us, what delights us in this unreal world? It is impossible to say. A house with its master, which passes away in a state of perpetual change, may well be compared to a morning-glory with a dew drop upon it. Sometimes the dew falls and the flower remains but only to die in the first sunshine: sometimes the dew survives the drooping flower, yet can not live till the evening.

More than forty years of existence have rewarded me with the sight of several wonderful spectacles in this world. On the 28th of April in the 3rd year of Angen (1177) when the wind was raging and the night was boisterous, a fire broke out at eight o'clock in the south-eastern part of the city and spread towards the north-east. The Sujakuden[2], the Daikyokuden, the Daigakurio, and the Mimbushō were all reduced to ashes in one night. A temporary structure at Tominokōji in Hinokuchi where the sick were lodged, was said to be the starting-point of the winged conflagration. Caught by the wind hovering around, the fire soon proceeded thence in the form of an open fan. It enveloped[3] distant houses in smoke, and licked with fiery tongues the neighbouring ground. Sparks scattered on high, blazing with dazzling light, presented a brilliant glow of immense dimension. Amidst this red chaos, the flames driven by the wind, flew over the distance of one or two chō and found their new home in another quarter. The inhabitants were of course out of their wits. Some fell choked with smoke, others died in the conflagration. Those who fortunately escaped with their lives, lost all their property. No estimate could be formed of the treasures and riches that perished. One third of the city was left a wilderness. Thousands of people together with an immense number of cattle, fell victims to this merciless conflagration. Of all human contrivances which prove fruitless, the feeblest is that effort of theirs to reside in cities which are so dangerous.

On the 29th of February in the fourth year of Jishō (1180), a whirlwind arose in Kiogoku and rushed toward Rokujō with terrible vehemence. Travelling three or four chō in one gust, it wrecked all the houses standing in its way. Some were thrown down flat upon the ground; others stood only with their pillars. The roofs of gates were blown off, fences were broken and neighbours found their mansions without any boundaries. Articles of furniture were whirled up into the sky; the bark and thatch which had covered the roofs looked like leaves before a wintry wind. The dust which, like thick smoke, blinded our eyes, the raging of the gale which drowned all human voices, reminded one of the Gō wind of Hell.[4] The wind destroyed not only houses,

but maimed many people who were engaged in checking its work. It travelled toward the south-west much to the grief of people living there. Though a whirlwind usually springs up, such a violent one is indeed an exception. I could not help thinking then that it was meant for a warning from the Unseen.

*(Several paragraphs which follow are devoted to an account of the removal of the capital to Setstsu in 1180, of the famine during Yōwa (1181), of the pestilence in the same year, the earthquake in the second year of Genreki. All these however are not essential to the true purport of the piece, so that we can dispense with them with little hesitation.)*

Such are the evils of the world, the instability of life and of human habitations. Still greater' is the distress which we experience through the shackles of social bonds. Those who enjoy the favour of the great may for a moment be steeped in pleasure, but Can not enjoy permanent happiness. Even forcing back their tears, they sometimes counterfeit a careless smile, though always restless in demeanour. Like a sparrow close by the nest of an eagle, they live in a state of perpetual fear. Poor folks, on the other hand, are vexed with their wretched condition, are forced to look on the impotent envy of their wives and children, and to put up with the insolence of their rich neighbours. They too are unable to enjoy even a moment's peace of mind. Again those who live near thoroughfares can never escape the fury of conflagration when it rages. Let them reside in the country; they are then subject to no small disadvantage of bad roads, not to speak of an occasional attack from burglars. The strong knows no content, the single is the object of contempt; wealth brings with it an equal amount of care; poverty always goes hand in hand with distress; reliance makes one another's slave; charity fetters the mind with affection: to act exactly like others is intolerable; not to act as they do seems to be madness. In what place shall we settle and with what occupation shall we amuse ourselves?

Inheriting my paternal grandmother's estate, I lived long there. Bereft of my family, however, and having lost vigour through a series of misfortunes, I was at last compelled to forsake the paternal estate, when I was thirty years of age and to inhabit a hut with no other companion than my own mind. When compared to my former residence in extent, it was scarcely more than one-tenth. A room there was indeed, but a house it was not in the proper sense of the term. No gate adorned the poor hedge. Bamboo pillars supported the roof: the floor rested upon a wagon[5] When the wind blew hard or a snow-storm set in, the hut was in constant danger of being swept off or of falling down. Moreover, being situated near the river bank, a flood could easily wash it away. Thus overtaxed with earthly cares, my mind fell an easy prey to despondency. In the meantime, however, changes in physical surroundings and the vicissitudes of fortunes, reminded me of the ephemeral character of human destiny. The time came at last when I left the house and left the world altogether. Bound by no family ties, I left no yearning toward what I had left; being no pensioner, why should I long for my former position? Many springs and summers were spent among the clouds of Mount Ohara.

Now when the dew of sixty years was on the point of vanishing, once again did it condense upon a tiny leaf.[6] You might compare it to a night's shelter for a belated traveller or a cocoon inhabited by an old silk-worm. In extent, this new hut of mine could not claim even one-hundredth of the former. You see, my life was declining, and the house was reduced along with it. In structure it resembled no ordinary house. The room was ten feet by ten; its height was less than seven. It occupied no

permanent site, because I had no mind to settle in a definite place. A clay-built floor, a thatched roof, and planks linked together with hooks, so that they might be removed easily if necessary, constituted my abode. What expense was I liable to in changing my home? Two carts were enough to carry the house itself. Only the little hire for them, nothing more!

Here during my seclusion in the innermost recesses of Hino, I added a temporary blind on the southern side of the hut with a bamboo mat under it: an akadana (water-shelf) along the western wall, has become the sacred place for putting the sacred image of Buddha so that his brow may be lit up by the mellow beams of the setting sun. On each of the door leaves, I have hung a picture of Hugen and Hudō. On a little shelf above the northern door sash, are placed a few trunks of black leather, containing some poetical extracts in Japanese, songs, Ōjio-yōshū and the like. Close by, against the wall, you will find a koto and a biwa to which I gave the name of 'Ori-goto' and 'Tsugi-biwa' respectively. On the east side, a bed consisting of old fern leaves scattered about and a mat of straw, a writing desk below the window, a brazier beside a pillow, completed its furnishing. A little patch of ground to the north of the hut, was laid out as my garden where I planted several medicinal herbs, enclosed by a broken hedge. This is the condition of my temporary abode.

As to its surroundings: in the south, there is a pipe conducting water to a reservoir made of piled stones. Woods being near in the vine-clad Toyama, there is plenty of fruit and of logs. Though the valley is dark with thickets, is opens towards the west and thus offers much help to meditation[7] In spring, my sight is attracted by the wavy clusters of the Fuji (Wistaria chinensis) which sends its fragrant odour out of its purple clouds. In summer, the cuckoo with its doleful note[8] puts me in mind of 'the mountain path of Death.' Autumn fills my ears with the shrill chirps of cicad as which I interpret as the dirge for life as empty as their cast-off shells. In winter I sympathize with snow because of its semblance to human sins, accumulating in depth and then melting away. If indisposed, I freely neglect to say prayers or to read sacred books (Kyō), without being admonished by anyone for the omission. Nor have I any friend before whom I might feel ashamed for this negligence of duty. Though not specially inclined to observe the 'discipline of silence[9],' I am always observant of it, for I have no companion to enter into conversation, and thereby to break the discipline. Being out of the reach of any temptation, I have no chance of breaking the canons of Buddhism. When in the morning, I chance to come to the river's side, and behold boats sailing in it, I feel that I am just in the same mood and position as Man-shami.[10] When the cinnamon wind rustles among the leaves, I imagine the scene in Junyō-Bay[11] and begin to play upon the biwa in imitation of Cinnamon Dainagon.[12] A performance of the 'autumnnal wind' may vie with the echoes from the pines: the song of the 'flowing fountain' is tuned like the murmurs of water.[13] I do not profess any skill in the art, but then I do not play for other's enjoyment. I croon for myself, thrum for myself, only to refresh my mind.

At the foot of the mountain, there is a little cot in which the keeper of the mountain lives. His boy visits me now and then and is my companion in leisurely strolls. He is sixteen years of age and I am sixty. This difference of age, however, does not Cause any difference of pleasure which we equally share.

To collect cranberries, to gather kaya-flowers, to fill our basket with the fruits of the yama-imo, to pick parsley, to weave a mat of the fallen ears of corn — such are our diversions. In fine weather I climb up mountain peaks, to behold my native province in the distance: and enjoy the surrounding scenery to my heart's content. I can do that, because nature is not the private property of particular individuals. Long

excursions are also undertaken. Then I go over Sumiyama, pass Kasadori, bow before the shrine of Iwama, make a pilgrimage to Isiyama: or I visit the ruins of the cottage of the old Semimaru[14] far in the moor of Awazu, linger about the grave of Sarumarudaū, on the further side of the Tagami (sic) river. On my way home, I am often rewarded for my walk with a bough of cherry, a branch of maple, a bunch of ferns or a basket of fruit, which I offer to Buddha or keep for my own use. The bright moon in the calm night recalls to me the men of old the cries of monkeys moisten my sleeves with tears: fireflies in the sward gleam as if they were torch-lights of Magijima (sic): a morning shower is an exact counterpart of the wind rustling through the leaves: the notes of a wild bird make me curious to know whether it is male or female[15]: the bold appearance of a hart reminds me of the wide gap existing between the world and me: the ash-covered charcoal newly stirred up, is an old man's delightful companion, in his midnight awaking from sleep; the moping voice of owls fills my mind with pity. Scenes like these are indeed inexhaustible here. Those who are profounder in reflection, and quicker in perception than I, cannot fail to find many other things which may likewise attract their attention.

Five years have elapsed since I first settled here. The temporary shed has now been reduced to an all but dilapidated condition. Deep under the eaves, the fallen leaves have accumulated, being left to moulder there. Moss too has grown upon the floor. Occasional tidings from town have announced to me the death of many noble persons there. And I can easily calculate the number of the humble people who have also been similarly overtaken. Many houses too, must have been burnt in the frequent fires. Only this humble cot of mine is safe and quiet. However narrow, it has been a bed by night and a seat by day, and is enough to shelter me. The gōna[16] likes its little shell because he knows content: the fish-hawk inhabits a rough beach because he is afraid of men. Like them I think of myself alone in this world. I cherish no objects, seek no friendship. Tranquillity is my sole desire, to have no trouble is my happiness. Others do not build their houses for themselves; their houses are either for their families or for their friends or for their tutors and lords, or even for their oxen, horses and treasure. But I have built mine for my own sake, because I have no companion, no friend to live with me.

What is friendship but respect for the rich and open-handed and contempt for the just and kind? Better to make associates of music and nature! Our servants only care for rewards and punishments and estimate our favour by the amount of largesses given them. We throw away kindness upon them who never require it. Let us rather be our own servants. To use our own hands and legs, if somewhat irksome, is much easier than employing others. Let us employ our bodies in a double way. Our arms are our servants, our legs are our vehicles. The mind which knows how it goes with the body, may use the latter if fresh, allow it to rest if tired. Let the mind take care not to overtax the body with labour, not to grant the latter's disposition to be idle. To take exercise is healthy: why then should we sit and do nothing? To trouble others is a sin, why should we ask others for help?

As to diet and clothes, I observe the same principle. A garment of 'fuji' and a bed-quilt of hemp are sufficient to cover my body. The kaya-flower, which flourishes in the wilderness, some fruit scattered about the mountain side may very well sustain my life. The poor figure so thinly clad, is no object of ridicule here in solitude. Meals so scanty have still a relish for me. I do not intend those remarks as a sermon for those in easy circumstances, but I want only to compare my former days with the present. Envy and fear have been expelled from my mind since I renounced the world's pleasure. Without regret and without reluctance, I follow my fortune as Providence

leads me. Regarding self as a floating cloud, I do not rely on it, nor, on the other hand, am dissatisfied with it in the least. Temporal pleasure has dwindled into nothing over the pillow of the dreamer: his life-long wish still finds its satisfaction in the beautiful in nature.

The three worlds consist of only one mind.[17] Treasures, horses, oxen, palaces, towers, what are they, if the mind is uneasy? I enjoy the peace of mind in this lonely place, in this small cottage. In town I might be ashamed to become a beggar; settled here, however, I pity those who toil and moil in the dusty highway of the world. He who doubts what I say, need only look at fishes and birds. Fishes never get weary of water: none but fishes knows their motive. Birds are fond of woods; none but birds may tell you why. The same may be said of seclusion. Its pleasure can not be understood by one who has not led such a life.

The lunar course of my life is fast declining and is getting every moment nearer to the peak of death. If the time comes when I make a sudden start for the darkness of 'the three ways',[18] of what use would it be to trouble my mind with earthly cares? Buddha teaches us to love no earthly things. To love this mossy hut is still a sin: tried tranquillity is certainly an obstruction to salvation. Woe to them! who indulge in useless pleasures to while away time.

One still morning after those reflections, I began to ask myself: "The object of escaping from the world and of living among woods and mountains is nothing but to tranquillize our mind and to practise your principles. But your mind is soaked in impurity, though your appearance resembles a sage. Your conduct even falls short of Shûribandoku's[19] though your hut is like that of Jiomio-Koji.[20] Is it the effect of poverty or is it the influence of some impure thought?" No answer did I give to this question but twice or thrice repeated involuntary prayers.

The last day of March, the 2nd year of Kenreki (1211).

Monk Renin at the hut of Toyama

"Alas! the mountain peak conceals the moon;
Her constant light's denied to me aboon."

*End of Sample*