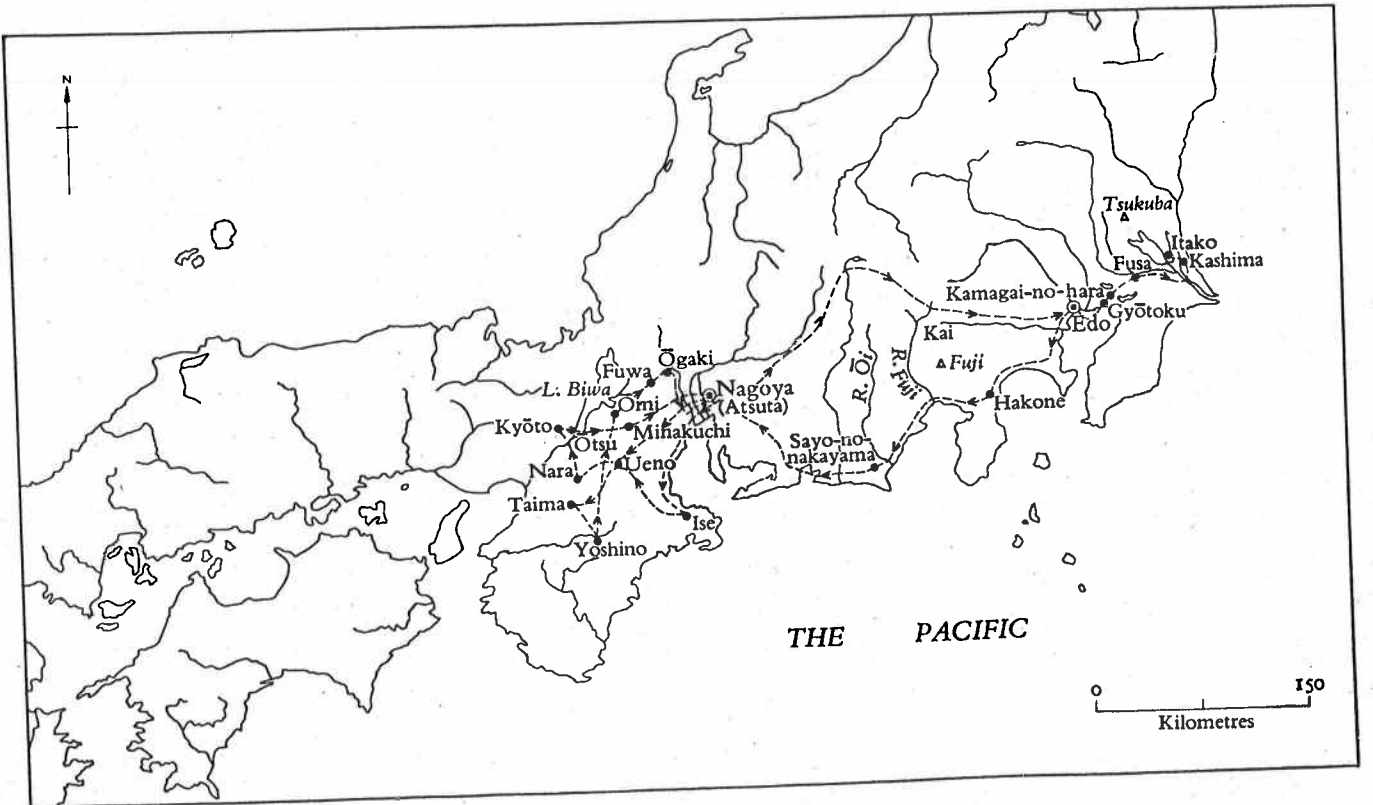


THE RECORDS OF A TRAVEL-WORN SATCHEL

IN this mortal frame of mine which is made of a hundred bones and nine orifices there is something, and this something is called a wind-swept spirit for lack of a better name, for it is much like a thin drapery that is torn and swept away at the slightest stir of the wind. This something in me took to writing poetry years ago, merely to amuse itself at first, but finally making it its lifelong business. It must be admitted, however, that there were times when it sank into such dejection that it was almost ready to drop its pursuit, or again times when it was so puffed up with pride that it exulted in vain victories over the others. Indeed, ever since it began to write poetry, it has never found peace with itself, always wavering between doubts of one kind and another. At one time it wanted to gain security by entering the service of a court, and at another it wished to measure the depth of its ignorance by trying to be a scholar, but it was prevented from either because of its unquenchable love of poetry. The fact is, it knows no other art than the art of writing poetry, and therefore, it hangs on to it more or less blindly.

Saigyōi in traditional poetry, Sōgi² in linked verse, Sesshū³ in painting, Rikyū⁴ in tea ceremony, and indeed all who have achieved real excellence in any art, possess one thing in common, that is, a mind to obey nature, to be one with nature, throughout the four seasons of the year.



Whatever such a mind sees is a flower, and whatever such a mind dreams of is the moon. It is only a barbarous mind that sees other than the flower, merely an animal mind that dreams of other than the moon. The first lesson for the artist is, therefore, to learn how to overcome such barbarism and animality, to follow nature, to be one with nature.

It was early in October when the sky was terribly uncertain that I decided to set out on a journey. I could not help feeling vague misgivings about the future of my journey, as I watched the fallen leaves of autumn being carried away by the wind.

From this day forth
I shall be called a wanderer,
Leaving on a journey
Thus among the early showers.
You will again sleep night after night
Nestled among the flowers of sasanqua.⁵

The second of these poems was written to encourage me by Chōtarō,⁶ a native of Iwaki, when he held a farewell party for me at the house of Kikaku.⁷

It is winter now,
But when the spring comes,
Your bundle shall contain
Cherry-blossoms of Yoshino.

This poem was an extremely courteous gift of Lord Rosen.⁸ Other friends, relatives and students of mine followed his example by visiting me with poems and letters of farewell or sending me money for straw sandals, so that

I was spared the trouble of preparing for my journey, which normally, it is said, takes as long as three months. In fact, everything I needed for my journey – the paper raincoat, the cotton-stuffed mantle, the hat, the stockings, etc, to keep me warm in the dead of winter – was given me by my friends, and as I was invited to parties on a boat, at my friends' houses, or even at my own hermitage, I became used to the pomp and splendour of feasting unawares and almost fell a victim to the illusion that a man of importance was leaving on a journey.

From time immemorial the art of keeping diaries while on the road was popular among the people, and such great writers as Lord Ki,⁹ Chōmei,¹⁰ and the nun Abutsu¹¹ brought it to perfection. Later works are by and large little more than imitations of these great masters, and my pen, being weak in wisdom and unfavoured by divine gift, strives to equal them, but in vain. It is easy enough to say, for example, that such and such a day was rainy in the morning but fine in the afternoon, that there was a pine tree at such and such a place, or that the name of the river at a certain place was such and such, for these things are what everybody says in their diaries, although in fact they are not even worth mentioning unless there are fresh and arresting elements in them. The readers will find in my diary a random collection of what I have seen on the road, views somehow remaining in my heart – an isolated house in the mountains, or a lonely inn surrounded by the moor, for example. I jotted down these records with the hope that they might provoke pleasant conversation among my readers and that they might be of some use to those who would travel the same way. Nevertheless, I must admit that

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my records are little more than the babble of the intoxicated and the rambling talk of the dreaming, and therefore my readers are kindly requested to take them as such.

I stopped overnight at Narumi.

The voices of plovers

Invite me to stare

Into the darkness

Of the Starlit Promontory.¹²

The host of the inn told me that Lord Asukai Masaaki¹³ had once lodged here on his way from Kyōto and left behind him the following poem in his own handwriting.

As I stand alone

On the beach of Narumi,

I feel the expanse of the sea

That severs me so

From the ancient capital.

I myself wrote:

Only half the way I came

To the ancient capital,

And above my head

Clouds heavy with snow.

I wanted to visit Tokoku¹⁴ at his hermitage in the village of Hobi in the province of Mikawa. I first sent for Etsujin,¹⁵ and we walked together twenty-five miles or so in the direction of the village till we put up at an inn at Yoshida.

Cold as it was,

We felt secure

Sleeping together

In the same room.

The Records of a Travel-worn Satchel

I followed a narrow winding path in the middle of rice fields at Amatsu Nawate among the biting blasts from the sea.

In the sun

Of a cold winter day,

My shadow had frozen stiff

On horseback.

The promontory of Irago was about a mile from the village of Hobi. One could reach it by land from the province of Mikawa, but from the province of Ise one had to cross the ocean, and yet it was somehow included among the sights of Ise by a poet of *Manyō Shū*.¹⁶ I picked some pebbles on the beach, the so-called white stones of Irago used for the games of *go*.¹⁷ Mount Honeyama behind was famous for hawks, for this southern promontory was one of the places where hawks came very early each year. Just as I was trying to recall ancient poems on the hawk,

By a singular stroke

Of luck, I saw

A solitary hawk circling

Above the promontory of Irago.

The Atsuta Shrine was under reconstruction.

Not a flaw there is

On the polished surface

Of the divine glass,

Chaste with flowers of snow.

I was invited to Nagoya, a city to the west of the Atsuta Shrine, to have a short rest.

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Surely there must be
Someone crossing
The pass of Hakone
On this snowy morning.

I was invited to a party.

Stretching by force
The wrinkles of my coat,
I started out on a walk
To a snow-viewing party.

Deep as the snow is,
Let me go as far as I can
Till I stumble and fall,
Viewing the white landscape.

I was a guest poet at my friend's house.

Searching for the scent
Of the early plum,
I found it by the caves
Of a proud storehouse.

During my stay in Nagoya, I composed quite a number
of linked verses, long and short, with my friends who had
come from Ōgaki and Gifu.
I left Nagoya, however, several days after December the
tenth, headed for my native place.

Spending an idle day
At an inn, I saw people

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Dusting their houses
At the end of the year.

At the village of Hinaga, where it is said an ancient poet¹⁸
coming from Kuwana found himself almost starved to
death, I hired a horse and climbed the steep slope of the
Support-yourself-on-a-stick Pass.¹⁹ As I was unaccustomed
to horse-riding, however, I had a fall at one point, the
saddle and myself overthrown by a jerk.

Had I crossed the pass
Supported by a stick,
I would have spared myself
The fall from the horse.

Out of the depressing feeling that accompanied the fall, I
wrote the above poem impromptu, but found it devoid of
the seasonal word.

Coming home at last
At the end of the year,
I wept to find
My old umbilical cord.

Unwilling to part with the passing year, I drank till late
on the last day of December. When I awoke after a long
sleep, the first day of the new year was more than half gone.

On the second at least
I will get up early
To give welcome
To the floral spring.

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Scenes of early spring:

Fresh spring!
The world is only
Nine days old –
These fields and mountains!

Heated spring air
In tiny waves
Of an inch or two –
Above wintry grass.

There was the ruined site of the temple built by the high priest Shunjō²⁰ at the village of Awa in the province of Iga. The name of this temple was known to have been Gohōzan Shindaibutsuji, but now this long name alone was the witness of its past glory. The main hall had been completely destroyed, leaving only foundations, and the priests' living quarters had been reduced to paddies and fields. The tall statue of Buddha, originally six feet and six inches tall, had become covered with green moss save for the divine face that shone forth as in former days. The image of the founder stood erect, but it was a pity to see it among the ruins, where sage-brush and other weeds had grown rank on empty stone platforms and pedestals. Dead, too, were the couple of sacred *sai* trees that had once been the pride of the temple.

Almost as high
As the crumbled statue,
The heated air shimmering
From the stone foundation.

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Many things of the past
Are brought to my mind,
As I stand in the garden
Staring at a cherry tree.

I paid a visit to the shrine at Ise Yamada.

Not knowing
The name of the tree,
I stood in the flood
Of its sweet smell.
It is a bit too cold
To be naked
In this stormy wind
Of February.

At Bodaisan:

Tell me the loneliness
Of this deserted mountain,
The aged farmer
Digging wild potatoes.

Upon meeting my friend, Ryū Shōsha.²¹

'Before all else tell me
The name of this rush,'
I said to the scholar,
Pointing to the young leaves.

I met Setsudō, son of Ajiro Minbu.²²

A young shoot has borne
Beautiful flowers,

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Growing upon
An aged plum tree.

I was invited to a hermitage.

Surrounded by potato fields,
The gate stands,
Half buried by the fresh leaves
Of goose grass.

I wondered why there was not a single plum tree in the holy compound of the Ise Shrine. The priest, however, told me that there was no special reason, and that I could find a solitary stock in the back of the house where the sacred virgins lived.

How befitting it is
For holy virgins,
A solitary stock of
Fragrant plum.

What a stroke of luck
It is to see
A picture of Nirvana
In this holy compound!

When the middle of March came, I could no longer suppress the desire to leave for Yoshino, for in my mind the cherry blossoms were already in full bloom. There was a man who promised to accompany me to Yoshino at the promontory of Irago, and he joined me at Ise.²³ He was eager to enjoy various views with me and also to help me

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as a servant while on the road. He changed his name to Mangiku-maru, which I liked exceedingly for its boyish flavour. We celebrated our start by scribbling on our hats 'Nowhere in this wide universe have we a fixed abode – A party of two wanderers'.

Wait a while,
I will show you
The cherries of Yoshino,
My cypress hat.

Wait a while,
My cypress hat,
I will show you too
The cherries of Yoshino.

Written by Mangiku-maru

I threw away quite a number of things, for I believed in travelling light. There were certain things, however, I had to carry on my back – such as a raincoat, an overcoat, an inkstone, a brush, writing paper, medicine, a lunch basket – and these constituted quite a load for me. I made such slow progress that I felt deeply depressed as I walked along with faltering steps, giving as much power as I could to my trembling knees.

Tired of walking
I put up at an inn,
Embraced comfortably
By wisteria flowers.

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At Hatsuse:

There is a man
Sitting for meditation
In a temple corner
On a spring night.

Priests are walking
In high clogs
Among the rain that falls
On cherry blossoms.

Written by Mangiku

At Mount Kazuraki:

God of this mountain,
May you be kind enough
To show me your face
Among the dawning blossoms?

After visits to Mount Miwa and Mount Tafu, I climbed
the steep pass of Hosō.

Higher than the lark
I climbed into the air,
Taking breath
At the summit of a pass.

At the waterfall called Dragon's Gate:²⁴

A spray of blossoms
On the Dragon's Gate
Would be an excellent gift
For tipplers.

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Tipplers would be overjoyed
To hear from me
About this bridge of blossoms
Across the waterfall.

At Nijikkō:

One after another
In silent succession fall
The flowers of yellow rose –
The roar of tumbling water.

I visited the waterfalls of Seirei, Furu, Numobiki, and
Mino, the second being slightly less than half a mile from
the shrine of Furu, and the last on the way to the temple of
Kachio.

Cherry blossoms:

From five to six miles
I walk every day
In search of you,
Cherry blossoms.

Cherry blossoms
In the darkening sky,
And among them a melancholy
Ready-to-bloom-tomorrow.²⁵

Using my fan
For a cup,
I pretended to drink
Under the scattering cherry.

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Upon seeing a crystal spring coming out of a mossy rock:

The spring rain
Must have penetrated
Through the leaves
To feed the crystal spring.

During my three days' stay in Yoshino, I had a chance to see the cherry blossoms at different hours of the day – at early dawn, late in the evening, or past midnight when the dying moon was in the sky. Overwhelmed by the scenes, however, I was not able to compose a single poem. My heart was heavy, for I remembered the famous poems of Sesshōkō,²⁶ Saigyō, Teishitsu and other ancient poets. In spite of the ambitiousness of my original purpose, I thus found the present journey utterly devoid of poetic success.

At Mount Kōya:

Hearing a pheasant
In the mountains,
I pine with the warmest love
For my father and mother.
Because of my hair
I suffered a humiliation
Under the scattering cherry
At the holiest of shrines.

Written by Mangiku

At Wakanoura:

Abreast I am at last
With the fleeing spring
Here in the open bay
Of Wakanoura.

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I wrote this poem in the temple of Kimmidera overlooking the sea.

Dragging my sore heels, I plodded along like Saigyō, all the time with the memory of his suffering at the River Tenryū in my mind, and when I hired a horse, I thought of the famous priest²⁷ who had experienced the disgrace of being thrown from his horse into a moat. Nevertheless, it was a great pleasure to see the marvellous beauties of nature, rare scenes in the mountains or along the coast, or to visit the sites of temporary abodes of ancient sages where they had spent secluded lives, or better still, to meet people who had entirely devoted themselves to the search for artistic truth. Since I had nowhere permanent to stay, I had no interest whatever in keeping treasures, and since I was empty-handed, I had no fear of being robbed on the way. I walked at full ease, scorning the pleasure of riding in a palanquin, and filled my hungry stomach with coarse food, shunning the luxury of meat. I bent my steps in whatever direction I wished, having no itinerary to follow. My only mundane concerns were whether I would be able to find a suitable place to sleep at night and whether the straw sandals were the right size for my feet. Every turn of the road brought me new thoughts and every sunrise gave me fresh emotions. My joy was great when I encountered anyone with the slightest understanding of artistic elegance. Even those whom I had long hated for being antiquated and stubborn sometimes proved to be pleasant companions on my wandering journey. Indeed, one of the greatest pleasures of travelling was to find a genius hidden among weeds and bushes, a treasure lost in broken tiles, a mass of gold buried in clay, and when I did find such a person, I

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always kept a record with the hope that I might be able to show it to my friends.

The day for the spring change of clothing came.

I took a kimono off

To feel lighter

Only putting it in the load

On my back.

The moment I descended

Mount Yoshino,

I sought to sell

My cotton-stuffed coat.

Written by Mangiku

I was in Nara on Buddha's birthday, and saw the birth of a fawn. I was so struck by the coincidence that I wrote:

By what divine consideration

Is it, I wonder,

That this fawn is born

On Buddha's birthday?

Ganjin, 28 founder of the Shōdaiji Temple, is said to have lost his sight on his way to Japan on account of the salt that jumped into his eyes while he endured seventy different trials on the sea. After bowing devoutly before his statue, I wrote:

If only you allow me,

I will willingly wipe

Salt tears from your eyes

With these fresh leaves.

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I parted from an old friend of mine in Nara.

Just as a stag's antlers

Are split into tines,

So I must go willy-nilly

Separated from my friend.

At a certain man's home in Ōsaka:

To talk casually

About an iris flower

Is one of the pleasures

Of the wandering journey.

At the beach of Suma:

The moon is in the sky,

But as if someone were absent

The whole scene is empty –

The summer at Suma.

I saw the moon,

But somehow I was left

Unsatisfied –

The summer at Suma.

It was in the middle of April when I wandered out to the beach of Suma. The sky was slightly overcast, and the moon on a short night of early summer had special beauty. The mountains were dark with foliage. When I thought it was about time to hear the first voice of the cuckoo, the light of the sun touched the eastern horizon, and as it increased, I began to see on the hills of Ueno ripe ears of wheat tinged

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with reddish brown and fishermen's huts scattered here and there among the flowers of white poppy.

At sunrise I saw
Tanned faces of fishermen
Among the flowers
Of white poppy.

There were three villages on this beach, Higashi-suma, Nishi-suma, and Hama-suma. None of these villages, however, seemed to have a distinctive local trade. According to an ancient poet,²⁹ there used to be a great number of salt farms on the beach, but they must have gone out of existence years before. I saw small fish called *kisugo* spread on the sand to be dried. Some villagers – they hardly seemed professional fishermen – were guarding the fish against the crows that dived to grab them. Each had a bow and arrow in his hand. I wondered why these people still resorted to such a cruel means without the slightest sense of guilt, and thought of the bloody war³⁰ that had taken place in the mountains at the back of the beach. I wanted to see the site of this old war. So I started to climb Mount Tetsukai. The boy who had been acting as my guide, however, did not like the idea and tried every means to evade it. I coaxed him by saying that I would buy him a dinner after our return, and the boy began to walk, submitting to my request. This boy was sixteen, I was told, but he looked much younger than the other boys I had seen in the village. He walked in front of me, climbing several hundreds of feet through a steep rocky path with many a turn. He slipped. countless times, but, always clinging to a root of bamboo or wild azalea, he led the way, completely out of breath

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and with his brow sweating profusely. It was indeed thanks to this wild effort of the young guide that I was able to reach the gateway of clouds.

Off the sharp point
Of a fisherman's arrow
I heard the cry
Of a wild cuckoo.

Where the cuckoo's voice
Glided into the sea
Shooting across the sky,
I found an island.

In the temple of Suma,
Under the shade of a tree,
I thought I had heard
An ancient flute on the march.

I stopped overnight at Akashi.

Settled in trap-pots,
Octopuses may be exulting
In their ecstasy of a single night
Under the moon of summer.

It was by a singular stroke of genius that an ancient writer pointed out that autumn was the best season to visit this beach, for it seemed to me that the scene excelled in loneliness and isolation at that season. It was, on the other hand, an incurable folly of mine to think that, had I come here in autumn, I would have had a greater poetic success, for that only proved the poverty of my mind. The island

of Awaji lay just across a narrow strip of water and the corresponding hill on the mainland side divided the beach of Suma on the left and that of Akashi on the right. I was reminded of a similar scene on the border of Go and So in China,³¹ but a man of greater learning would have thought of many other scenes of a similar nature.

There was a small village called Tai-no-hata in the mountains behind, and this was the birthplace of the two sisters, Matsukaze and Murasame.³² From this village I followed a narrow ridge road leading to the province of Tamba through many a precipice having such fearful names as Hell's Window³³ and Headlong Fall.³⁴ When I came to Ichi-no-tani, the huge precipice where Yoshitsune³⁵ had performed the feat of a downhill rush with great success, I looked down into the valley over the pine tree on which he had hung his war gong and saw the site of his enemy's camp directly below my eyes. The great confusion of the day, together with other tragic incidents of the time, rose afresh in my mind, and I saw before me the aged grandmother of the young emperor taking him in her arms, his mother carrying him on her shoulders, his legs pitifully tangled with her dress, and all of them running into a boat to escape the onslaught of the enemy. Various ladies of the court followed them, and threw into the boat all kinds of things – rare musical instruments, for example – wrapped in sheets and quilts. Many things of value, however, must have fallen overboard – imperial food into the sea for the fish to feed upon, and ladies' vanity boxes on to the sand to be quite forgotten among the grass. This is probably why, even today after a thousand years, the waves break on this beach with such a melancholy sound.

A VISIT TO SARASHINA VILLAGE

THE autumn wind inspired my heart with a desire to see the rise of the full moon over Mount Obasute. That rugged mountain in the village of Sarashina is where the villagers in the remote past used to abandon their ageing mothers among the rocks. There was another man filled with the same desire, my disciple, Etsujin,¹ who accompanied me, and also a servant sent by my friend Kakei² to help me on the journey, for the Kiso road that led to the village was steep and dangerous, passing over a number of high mountains. We all did our best to help one another, but since none of us were experienced travellers, we felt uneasy and made mistakes, doing the wrong things at the wrong times. These mistakes, however, provoked frequent laughter and gave us the courage to push on.

At a certain point on the road, we met an old priest – probably more than sixty years of age – carrying an enormously heavy load on his bent back, tottering along with short, breathless steps and wearing a sullen, serious look on his face. My companions sympathized with him, and, taking the heavy load from the priest's shoulders, put it together with other things they had been carrying on my horse. Consequently, I had to sit on a big pile. Above my head, mountains rose over mountains, and on my left a huge precipice dropped a thousand feet into a boiling river, leaving not a tiny square of flat land in between, so that,

perched on the high saddle, I felt stricken with terror every time my horse gave a jerk.

We passed through many a dangerous place, such as Kakehashi, Nezame, Saru-ga-baba, Tachitōge, the road always winding and climbing, so that we often felt as if we were groping our way in the clouds. I abandoned my horse and staggered on my own legs, for I was dizzy with the height and unable to maintain my mental balance from fear. The servant, on the other hand, mounted the horse, and seemed to give not even the slightest thought to the danger. He often nodded in a doze and seemed about to fall headlong over the precipice. Every time I saw him drop his head, I was terrified out of my wits. Upon second thoughts, however, it occurred to me that every one of us was like this servant, wading through the ever-changing reefs of this world in stormy weather, totally blind to the hidden dangers, and that the Buddha surveying us from on high, would surely feel the same misgivings about our fortune as I did about the servant.

When dusk came, we sought a night's lodging in a humble house. After lighting a lamp, I took out my pen and ink, and closed my eyes, trying to remember the sighs I had seen and the poems I had composed during the day. When the priest saw me tapping my head and bending over a small piece of paper, he must have thought I was suffering from the weariness of travelling, for he began to give me an account of his youthful pilgrimage, parables from sacred *sūtras*, and the stories of the miracles he had witnessed. Alas, I was not able to compose a single poem because of this interruption. Just at this time, however, moonlight touched the corner of my room, coming through the hanging leaves

and the chinks in the wall. As I bent my ears to the noise of wooden clappers and the voices of the villagers chasing wild deer away, I felt in my heart that the loneliness of autumn was now consummated in the scene. I said to my companions. 'Let us drink under the bright beams of the moon,' and the master of the house brought out some cups. The cups were too big to be called refined, and were decorated with somewhat uncouth gold-lacquer work, so that over-refined city-dwellers might have hesitated to touch them. Finding them in a remote country as I did, however, I was pleased to see them, and thought that they were even more precious than jewel-inlaid, rare-blue cups.

Seeing in the country
A big moon in the sky,
I felt like decorating it
With gold-lacquer work.

On to a bridge
Suspended over a precipice
Clings an ivy vine,
Body and soul together.

Ancient imperial horses
Must have also crossed
This suspended bridge
On their way to Kyōto.

Halfway on the bridge,
I found it impossible
Even to wink my eye,
When the fog lifted.

Written by Etsujin

A Visit to Sarashina Village

Bidding farewell,
Bidden good-bye,
I walked into
The autumn of Kiso.

A poem composed at Zenkōji Temple:

Four gates
And four different sects
Sleep as one
Under the bright moon.
A sudden storm
Descends on Mount Asama,
Blowing stones
All over me.

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THE NARROW ROAD TO THE
DEEP NORTH AND OTHER
TRAVEL SKETCHES

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