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Introduction

Among the plethora of Edo-period texts discussing sex work and the licensed quarters, whether fictional, nonfictional, or straddling the line, there is one trilogy, belonging to the third category, that appears to have been mostly ignored by scholars of the era. The three texts that comprise the trilogy, *Takitsukegusa* たきつけ草 (Grass for Kindling), *Moekui* もえくゐ (Charred Sticks), and *Keshisumi* けしすみ (Dead Ashes), form part of the *kanazōshi* 仮名草子[1] genre known today as *yūjo hyōbanki* 遊女評判紀 (who's who among courtesans).[2] More specifically, they may be safely classified as belonging to that subset of *hyōbanki* called *showake hidenbutsu* 諸分秘伝物 (secret teachings on the intricacies), practical guidebooks or written documentaries on the way of life within the confines of the licensed quarters. As is typical for works of this type, the author's name and background are unknown, and each text takes the form of a lengthy, cursorily framed question-and-answer dialogue (*mondō* 問答) between a veteran of the licensed quarters (an old male client in the first two cases, a former sex worker in the third) and an interlocutor (a young man in the first two texts, an older one in the third) who is familiar only with the quarters' elaborate, colorful facade and ignorant of the misery it hides. This approach sheds light on the reality of the day-to-day lives of female sex workers in the late seventeenth century and beyond.[3]

As in many other texts on the subject, the main focus of the trilogy is on sex worker-client interaction. The difference is that all three parts of the trilogy, especially the first two, place the blame for all the falsehood and subterfuge that mar a client-worker relationship squarely on the shoulders of misbehaving men, not on the women, and castigate those men as unfeeling brutes concerned only with their own enjoyment, who treat their hired partners as dehumanized playthings. This insistence on sex workers' deserving recognition as human beings in their own right stands in stark

1 A very broad category of texts, written almost exclusively in kana with a few common kanji added in, aimed at a wide readership with varying levels of education.

2 Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, p. xii.

3 Hirose, "Kuruwa," pp. 96–98. The author explains (pp. 96–97) that the other two subsets are (1) *hyōbanki* in the narrow sense, providing lists and rankings of individual sex workers; and (2) works that combine the information found in these lists and rankings with that provided by the *hidenbutsu*. Also noted is that the term *hyōbanki* originated in Japanese literary science in the early twentieth century and was not used in the Edo period itself.

contrast to the general attitude of the era, vividly described by Amy Stanley, which valued women in the sex industry only insofar as they could be classified as filial daughters sacrificing their bodies in the service of impoverished parents.[4] The author of the trilogy translated below never once resorts to this trope, mentioning sex workers' parents only when he speaks of how sad it is for their daughters to be torn from them as young girls, indirectly condemning the brothels and their procurers—neither of whom are overtly mentioned—for such family tragedies.[5]

Another recurrent topic of the trilogy is that of sex workers' indomitable tendency to single out men whom they truly care for and maintain illicit romantic relationships with them. They are illicit because, as William Lindsey explains, the rules of the licensed quarters stated that sex workers were not permitted to form emotional bonds with a client, as this would negatively impact their performance with other customers and therefore be bad for business. And yet, as the anonymous author of the trilogy stresses again and again, such clandestine relationships are a matter of course, made possible by a sex worker's ingenuity and her disregard for any consequences to herself,[6] her affection for her man overriding all else.[7]

This is not to say, the texts that comprise the trilogy explain, that sex workers do not care about the bottom line: their monetary debt to the quarter makes it imperative that they bring in as much money as possible. Still, the anonymous author assures the reader, this justifiable interest in financial gain is only part of the reason a sex worker does her utmost to please her clients, the rest of it being simple kindheartedness and a sincere desire to take her clients' sadness away.[8] Whether or not this represents a case of idealization, warranted or unwarranted, is a moot question: right or wrong, the fact remains that the author is pulling out all the stops to get his readers to see female sex workers as three-dimensional, full human beings and so go against the prevailing gender ethos of his time.[9]

As praiseworthy as this goal is, it may be justly argued that, though merciless on the symptoms, the author completely ignores the root cause of the social disease he addresses. At no point does he mention that it was the Tokugawa government itself that was responsible for founding, maintaining, and regulating the licensed-

4 This running theme sets the texts apart from *hyōbanki* in general, which, as Hirose explains in detail, tend to describe licensed sex workers as amoral seductresses bent on relieving men of their money to the point of ruin. Hirose also analyzes some of the ways in which the trilogy attacks this common conviction (Hirose, "Kuruwa," pp. 99–109). The anonymous author does mention the financial ruin attendant upon excessive frequenting of the licensed quarters, but here too he blames the men themselves for their weakness and lack of restraint, as the women only give them what they request.

5 Stanley, *Selling Women*, pp. 1–19 and passim. Stanley discusses the economic importance of Edo-period female sex work and the ways in which this type of work's enormous profitability for society as a whole was both protected by and often clashed with contemporary conceptions of the "proper role" of women, which rendered sex work acceptable and even praiseworthy when practiced by so-called filial daughters whose earnings were destined for their impoverished parents, yet unacceptable and even dangerous when the sex workers in question sought only to earn money for themselves. The idea of independent, enterprising women was seen as threatening to social stability, the Tokugawa holy grail. On the flipside, Stanley frequently notes how the claim of being filial could be used as a weapon by the working women in question, as well as their parents, as a legal defense against abuse by brothel keepers. She shows that, compared to the periods immediately before and after, patriarchy in the Edo period, paradoxically, worked both for and against female autonomy and agency, providing a more nuanced understanding of the period than the earlier narrative of oppression.

6 Lindsey, *Fertility*, pp. 40–41, 101–102. Punishment administered to sex workers who "broke the rules" could be harsh, entailing such things as demotion, humiliation through menial labor, and severe physical punishment.

7 Lindsey, *Fertility*, p. 34 and passim. Lindsey describes, from a female perspective, the importance of ritual for the proper functioning of social institutions, with a specific focus on marriage and the licensed quarters, as well as the value system which underpinned and therefore helped structure and give meaning to these rituals. Rituals mark the transition from one life phase to another and help maintain a person's sense of identity and place in society during the course of any one stage. Lindsey seeks to show that the worlds of wifehood and female sex work in the Edo period had more in common than one might initially suspect, in that both were marked by rituals of what he terms entrance (i.e. the rituals surrounding marriage or a sex worker's debut), placement (the valuation of and ways of handling pregnancy in either household or brothel), and exit (divorce or absconding from the quarter) (pp. 16–17). This blurring of the lines between respectable and unrespectable calls into question how separate the licensed quarters truly were from the rest of society (p. 48 and passim).

8 Asuka Ryôko theorizes that, from prehistoric times right through to the Heian 平安 period (794–1185), ladies of pleasure (accomplished artists and often religious professionals who also provided sexual favors) were seen as women whose job it was to bring joy to the hearts of gods and men (Asuka, "Avant-propos," pp. 9–10). If this was indeed so, then an echo of this belief can be heard even in these Edo-period texts.

9 For more on this ethos, see Stanley, *Selling Women*, and Lindsey, *Fertility*. Additional information can be found in Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, and Watanabe, *Edo yūjo kibun*.

quarter system[10] and whose legal protection of female sex workers—and women in general—as Stanley argues, was erratic at best, though still better than what had come before and would come after. This omission is understandable, however, given the censorship laws of the period, which, had the texts contained any criticism of the government, would likely have prevented the work from being published at all.[11]

More problematic from a present-day point of view, though less so from an Edo-period one, is that the author never questions the need for sex workers in general and for licensed quarters in particular. Indeed, he rather seems to revel in their glories and consider their existence to be altogether natural. Limiting, let alone eradicating, sex work clearly was not his purpose: he only aimed to encourage people to render it more bearable for those employed in that line of work. For his time, this was revolutionary.

One final note concerning the text is that the author limits himself entirely to sex workers working within the licensed quarters, although he does include those of all ranks, not only the fabled *tayū* 太夫 (courtesan of the first rank) and *tenjin* 天神 (courtesan of the second rank). The veritable army of unlicensed prostitutes active outside the walls, be they bathhouse girls (*yuna* 湯女), teahouse girls (*chaya onna* 茶屋女), independent prostitutes (*shishō* 私娼), or any other kind, may just as well never have existed.[12] Given their prevalence, however, the notion that he was unaware of their existence is evidently absurd. In addition, his sympathy for sex workers employed within the licensed quarters makes it unlikely that he did not care about the lot of those working outside. We may perhaps speculate that, as independent sex workers were subject to severe official disapproval, mentioning them would have meant, once again, that the author would be unable to publish, and so publishing anonymously may well have been a tactical move.

A final word concerning existing scholarship on this trilogy. Other than the version edited by Noma Kōshin and published by Iwanami Shoten, there exists another, edited by Taniwaki Masachika and published by Shōgakukan. Parts one and two of the trilogy also exist in a French translation (not consulted in the making of this translation). Hirose's analysis has already been noted. Other than this, no academic attention appears to have been paid to the texts under discussion.

Noma Kōshin notes in his introduction that the first part of the trilogy was written in 1673 and that the other two parts followed within the decade.[13] This is borne out by the 1683 *Shimabara dai wareki* 島原大和暦 (Shimabara's Great Japanese Calendar), which also provides a capsule summary of the texts, indirectly confirms that the author was male, and shows that the trilogy had achieved at least some notoriety even during his lifetime. What the author's life history may have been, and how it led to his developing the convictions he did, unfortunately remains in the dark. From the *Dai wareki:*[14]

> あるじ、うれしげに、「たれとふ人もなし。めづらしくも若人と物がたりせん。茗などにてもとなし。われはかほどに、あづさの弓をはるばかりにはなりたれ共、恋といふおもしろさはわすれず。むかしになりし事どもをかたり、今のわけをもきかん」といふ。

10 For more information on the precise functioning of the licensed quarters, see Stanley, *Selling Women*, Lindsey, *Fertility*, Watanabe, *Edo yūjo kibun*, and especially Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*.

11 For more information on Edo-period censorship, see Suzuki et al., *Ken'etsu, media, bungaku*.

12 According to Stein (*Japans Kurtisanen*, p. 362), the nomenclature of licensed sex work was quite complex and changed over time and through space. He notes that *tayū* was a virtually universal term for the highest-ranking courtesans, while the word *tenjin* for courtesans of the next rank was limited to Kyoto's Shimabara 島原 district. The number of different ranks within a given licensed quarter also varied over time, from as few as three to as many as six at a time. As for unlicensed prostitutes, Watanabe (*Edo yūjo kibun*, pp. 7–8) notes in his introduction the existence of a bewildering array of names, none of them very flattering. Classification of sex-work categories in the Edo period, it is safe to say, is far from a simple matter.

13 Noma, "Kaisetsu," pp. 384–85.

14 According to the entry for this text on the website of the National Diet Library: "Author unknown. *Ukiyozōshi* 浮世草子. Published in Kyoto in the third year of the Tenna 天和 era (1683) by Chōbei 長兵衛 of the Wakiya 和気屋. Written as a question-and-answer dialogue between a young man of about twenty and an old man of eighty, this text describes customs and so on surrounding the ceremonial events that took place in Kyoto's Shimabara licensed quarter in the course of the year, with a special focus on prostitutes' holidays. The narrative begins on a summer evening and as such includes a description of the spirit bonfires of the Bon Festival in the seventh month. Within the text, the author is identified as having also written the *Takitsuke [sic]–Moekui–Keshizumi [sic]* trilogy." See https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2533010 for the original Japanese entry. This description is more than a little confusing, given that the old man in the *Dai wareki*, who indeed claims to have written the trilogy, is described in the third person and at no point actually identified as the author of the *Dai wareki*. Further research is required.

われ、ういて来て、「むかしの恋とは、いかさまの事かあらん」といふに、あるじほ / ゑみて、「古今さのみかはるいろあるまじけれども、我その年のころは、明くれいろにまよひ、心をくだくのみなりけらし。まづはさいつころ、かつら川のほとりの人のもとへがり、ゆきしかへさに、ただひとりしゆじやか野を過行に、年のほどおぼつかなきおとこ、つえをたよりにて道ゆくおやぢと、ふたりつぶやきゆくを、しりに立てきけば、くるはがへりのはなし也。よにおもしろき事かなとおもひ、み / をそばだてききもらさじと、ちまたの石のかずをもかぞへんほどに、あとによりそひかみざまにゆくに、色くのわけよき事、わるき事などい / 、しゆびもとめがたき事、もとめえたることなんい / 、上ろうの心入・しなどもかたりしに、わが身とはずかたらひもしけんと、身をばし / ゑめける。あまりたへがたさに、つれをもとめゆきにし比、さる尼ありてかたりし事などかきしるして、たきつけ・もえくゐ・けしすみと名づけ、三巻になしぬ。はや、みのがふもいさしらず」。われ、きもをつぶし、「さては、たきつけの作しやか」といふ。

With a joyful expression, my host said, "Nobody ever comes to visit me. Now that this rare opportunity presents itself, I'm going to have a chat with you, young man. I don't have the ingredients for tea or anything. Even all stretched out in years as I've become, I have not forgotten about this fascinating thing called love. I'm going to talk about how things were in the past and listen to what relationships are like today."

I was filled with excitement and asked, "What was love like in the old days?" My host smiled and replied, "Passion hasn't changed much between then and now, but in my time, I was lost in it day and night, and didn't seem to do anything but get my heart broken. This one time, I'd been visiting somebody near the Katsura River, and on my way back, I was crossing Shujaka Field all by myself when I saw a man whose age I wasn't sure of and an older one who used a walking stick for support, the two of them mumbling together as they went. When I got up behind them and listened, it turned out they were exchanging stories on their way back from the licensed quarters. I thought their talk might be really interesting, so I inclined my ear, determined not to let a word escape me. I stuck behind them for so long that I could have counted the crossroads markers all the way to the northern quarter of the capital, while they talked about all sorts of good things and bad things that could happen in relationships between men and women, about the difficulties encountered when trying to arrange a get-together *and* what it was like to achieve that goal, and they told each other about the mindset and character of prostitutes. When I got the impression that it was me they'd been spontaneously talking about,[15] I cringed. I couldn't take it. I went looking for a companion to vent my feelings to, when I came across a nun and put to paper the things that she and I talked about. I named my works *Kindling*,[16] *Charred Sticks*, and *Dead Ashes*, and made them into three volumes. What this will do to my karma, I honestly don't know." Stunned with surprise, I exclaimed, "So you're the author of *Kindling*!"[17]

In the translation that follows, some of the footnotes will themselves be translations, in whole or in part, of notes originally prepared by Noma Kōshin for the Iwanami Shoten edition, on which the following English version is based. These will be marked [NK] and accompanied by the relevant page numbers of the edition used.[18] Those notes (or parts of notes) focusing on language difficulties have been omitted, as including them in a translated version would have little meaning. So as not to make the annotation too heavy, literary references will be omitted likewise, except for those cases when this would make the meaning of the text unclear.

Grass for Kindling

In the tenth month of the year, I was on my way back home from paying a visit to somebody living west of the Katsura River.[19] I'd meant to cross Suzaka Field[20] and head for the northern quarter of the capital, but then I unexpectedly came across a group of freestanding buildings to my left, placed all in a row.[21] This, I thought then, *this* must be the place where the young

15 In other words, the narrator was hearing the story of his life through other people's experiences.
16 Note the abbreviated title.
17 Translation by author.
18 There may occasionally be a discrepancy between the page containing the footnote and the one containing the in-text reference.
19 In *Moekui*, it says, "A little over four years ago, on my way back home from a place called Nishi-no-oka..." Located in Nishioka 西岡 District, Otokuni 乙訓 County, Yamashiro 山城 Province, around the present-day city of Nagaokakyō 長岡京. [NK 94]
20 This refers to the fields around Ōuchi 大内 Village, Kuzuno 葛野 County. [NK 94]
21 Nishishin Yashiki 西新屋敷, commonly referred to as the Shimabara licensed quarter. [NK 94]

men of the capital are always going, the place where the women of easy virtue live! When I looked behind me, I saw two people walking along together down the Tanibaguchi—I think it was called—highway, on their way north to Ōmiya. Agewise, well, even though it was much too dark by then for me to be able to see clearly, one of them looked about thirty years old, while the other one seemed to be an old man at the age when you start needing a walking stick around the house, that is to say, fiftyish. I wondered to myself, in a low voice, what this might be about, and nodded in thought a couple of times, but when I caught a few snatches of their conversation, spoken in cheerful voices, I was overcome by a desire to know more, so I got up behind them and followed along. As it turned out, they were swapping stories to shorten the way home from the pleasure quarters, but it was still hard to make out what they were saying, so I pushed my cap to the side, moved up closer, and inclined my ear. When their words sank in, I discovered many things that were amusing, things that were interesting, and things that gave me pause indeed.

The young man said, "I tell you, I have never had a good time like the way I did at today's get-together. Even after that fight with my old girlfriend, I still managed to get her handed over by that guy she couldn't get rid of and, gods, the rush I got out of that. She was all over me when we got between the sheets, trying to get back in my good graces, and then we hit our high so hard we could barely even move afterward. Really, when you think about it, a guy who can't get with a girl is one sad piece of work. Aaah! Why, when you're the kind of guy who's got love on the brain all the time, does it have to be something you long for so hard?"

"So, basically, all while being well aware of your parents' scoldings and of what the world has to say about you, you still rack your brains night and day thinking up excuses to get out of the house. When you're the kind who'll go so far as to stand waiting, drenched in dew and frost, for the moment the gates open so you can get in as early as possible, then this... I guess we'll have to call it love, is not just going to be about having a nice chat with a girl. And sometimes you'll make an appointment in advance, and end up having to send a letter that says, 'I couldn't make it,' or, when something gets in the way and you arrive too late, 'The gates were closed and I ended up going home with nothing to show for my trip,' and then she writes, 'But you came to see me just yesterday,' you can't tell me you haven't been shown up. No matter how suave and sophisticated a man may be, when he's constantly there and has eyes for no one else but her, then there is no way she won't end up noticing a few flaws in him. Don't talk like a rookie. It's no good."

"Well of *course* it's to be expected from someone like you, pushing sixty or past it, to want to have a friendly, non-amorous meeting, but for a young guy like me, a 'nice chat' like that just wouldn't cut it. Honestly, that you're so upset about these hook-ups is because you're the stiff-and-steady type of old man. 'If there were no old men at all in the world, then our groaning hearts would finally get some peace.' Say what you will, but that's how it is.

"When you really look into the reasons why an old man is the way he is, you'll find that an encounter on the way of love has led to his having a son, and that he is now so unnaturally bent on keeping that son away from love that it has people saying, 'Why does he hate others' frolicking so much?' Isn't that right? In his stubborn old-man heart, he thinks prostitutes are 'such cold things,' 'such frightening things,' and it's because of thoughts like these that he's so strict and stern! You yourself now, don't *you* also think a prostitute is just an ice queen?"

When the young man had asked this, the old man coughed loudly and said, "Absolutely not. I do not in the least believe that the affection a prostitute gives is frosted-over cold. It's fools who say that such a woman 'is full of tricks and can't be trusted.' Even though her place in life is as unfixed as a piece of paper on a string, that does not mean that she is someone you can have no faith in. She plumbs the depth of the water in the hearts of the men she deals with, and though you may say that she gets pulled in and led around by whoever it is that holds the rope tied to the bucket hanging at the well, and that therefore a relationship with her cannot last, it is not the woman who is to blame for this. It's the result of the meanness of the actions of each and every man.

"She does not have one single soul that she can rely on, so when she's lying with her head on the pillow that has no fixed place beside that of the man from whom she parts in the morning and for whom she waits in the evening, it's only natural for her to feel pain when she thinks about where and from whom he got the scent that still lingers on his skin. Still, when you consider the reasons for this, and think of yesterday, with its ups and downs of love, as being like the fleeting course of

the Asuka River[22] that flows into today, then there is nothing hateful about her behavior at all.

"All this being the case, even when she meets with a man she doesn't care for, can she, to any degree, let her dislike shine through? No, she can't. From start to finish, she treats him in a way that shows a sweet desire to please, letting the waves advance and retreat between the rocks and smoothly yielding like the grass at the feet of boulders, and all such behaviors happen because the affection in the heart of every prostitute is the exact opposite of shallow. Do you understand me?"

To this answer of the old man's, the young man said, "It does make sense what you say, but everybody knows that being skilled in love, practicing lies and deception, and leading people astray is simply what prostitutes do, and yet you, all by yourself, set yourself up as their defender. Why do you do that?"

The old man laughed out loud. "I'm not setting myself up as a defender of prostitutes, I'm just putting forward my theories on the customs of the way of love. Like you said, prostitutes' lies and deception are something that everybody has on their tongues and in their heads, but this is just another sign of their small-mindedness. If it were true that the lies were only on the prostitutes' side and that the men were free from them, *then* those people would have a point, but the truth is that the men tell far more lies than the prostitutes do. No matter how much a woman may give the impression that she knows every trick in the book, the moment she thinks 'I have you' about a man, you can be sure that she's the one who's going to be had instead. A woman who, when she gets into bed with a man at their first meeting, comes prepared to say she's fallen in love with him, a woman like that, I say, is as rare as hen's teeth in the pleasure quarters, and you're unlikely to hear her say it even when you've met with her seven times already. Now even though, at first, the woman is determined not to be made into a toy for her client, when he starts sweet-talking her, swears by a thousand shrines that he'll be true, and declares that he'll rot and his bones bleach in the sun if he ever is unfaithful, spreading out those honeyed words on their pillows placed side by side, and when he makes his moon of a heart, full of oaths supposed to last a thousand or ten thousand years, shine forth between the mattress and the sheets, then the woman, being neither a rock nor a tree, responds to those smooth lies by thinking, 'Oh! Could it be true?' and loosens her undersash, knotted tight like thick ice on her snow-white skin. Her state of yielding, after all that, marks the beginning of a man's falsehoods. At this point, there are no lies on the woman's side at all.

"So, with this as a starting point, as the number of meetings increases, the woman is bound to become accustomed to the lies the man has told from the beginning and eventually start telling them herself, but to say that everything she says and everything she does is a lie, no, for that, you have to be an absolute idiot. Now, all of this is not to say that things like wheedling and seduction never happen. Still, when you look into the why of it, wheedling or being wheedled is not such a bad thing. Basically, what is called 'wheedling' a man means wheedling him by telling lies for the purpose of having him take a liking to you. Lies where she pretends to care for a man she feels nothing for do *not* somehow cross a line with regard to that man. For her to declare that she has genuine feelings for you, is that anything more or less than cause for rejoicing? The inclination out of which she lies to and deceives countless men and pretends to be deeply in love with them is not something to be tucked out of sight in your sleeve, it should be a happiness too great for your body to contain. To name *that* as an example of something horrible just goes to show how shallow some people's minds really are.

"Or another thing. Say you fall into mutual love with the daughter of some lord in the capital, or with a palace maid from somewhere or other, and the two of you swear to cross the river of passing hand in hand.[23] Compared to the depth of this bond, you'll have a woman of easy virtue who says nothing more than 'I haven't seen Mister So-and-so in a while.' Even if that man comes into her thoughts in no greater way than this, when she wakes up in the morning, say, or when she has a moment to spare a thought, when you compare to this, I say, the shared inclination of the couple I talked about to go across the mountains of death together, then the

22 The ways of the world of licentious entertainment. A prostitute, who makes a living by offering herself to numerous men, is called a "person of the flow" (*nagare no mi* 流れの身) and her profession is referred to as "setting up the flow" (*nagare o tatsu* 流れを立つ). The Asuka 飛鳥 River metaphorically stands for the way she has different clients every day and is unable to find anyone to rely on for support. [NK 96]

23 That is, the couple vows to stay together until death and pass away at the same moment.

prostitute's inclination is the deeper one by far. In case you're wondering why, it's because a woman from the city, putting all her trust in that one man, cherishes him as her darling, and the oath of a morning glory that doesn't wait for evening shade[24] will of course be deep. For a prostitute, on the other hand, for whom the number of pots she could put on her head at the Tsukuma Festival[25] or the number of strikes she'd receive with a young branch from the forest of Usaka[26] would show how many men she's had, the liking for him that leads her to remember one specific man from among them cannot possibly be considered shallow."

The young man said, "Yes, it's exactly like you say. I think just the same things, whenever I go to the quarter. But for all that, it's still a fact that as soon as she meets a client for the first time, the feelings with which she contemplates the possibility of a shallows she can count on being able to cross in the end[27] are deeper than the dew at the edge of a field of tall grass and quicker to take on their colors than the autumn leaves of Mt. Inari, and so, even if you frequent her with the kind of extreme sneakiness that would be fitting for the mountain where you hide to wait for a lover, there is no way to get to the bottom of a woman's heart. There is only your own heart, fallen into confusion and endlessly taken by her. But no matter how deep these feelings run, she's still a girlfriend you get in exchange for money, so you'll be running on your last coin even while you're swearing oaths by the mountains of Michinoku. And when that happens, the custom of crossing the waves seems like a horrible thing. Why is that?" he asked.

When the old man heard this, he said, "That is a very shallow suspicion to have. It's precisely because of that, because it *is* a relationship you get for money, that ignorant fools stuff their nighttime pillows with oaths deeper than the waters of Kawashima, since they think that's the only way to handle this kind of thing.

"All this makes for a very sad situation for a woman who has to sell her body for cash. Taken from her mother and father at a very young age, brought to an unpleasant home in the form of an unfamiliar enclosure, being made to work herself ragged as a young attendant to a courtesan, and then, after a couple of years, undergoing the harsh business of deflowering. Imagine the extent to which such a girl must feel that men are nasty, hateful creatures! After that, she sets up a connection with a client here, gets close to another one there, and if she's lucky, she'll climb up to a position she'd never even have dared to dream of. If she's unlucky, she'll sink down among the lowest of the low, doing a job that brings her suffering and heartache. There is no life more pitiful than this. Even if she rises all the way to the top, it's impossible to say that she runs a killer trade. No, because no matter if a prostitute is of high standing or of low rank, in neither case can she escape the pressure of the debts she owes. To know mental suffering of the kind I just described, along with a world tainted by the bitterness of Makuzugahara, even when it doesn't expose the pines to the colors of cold-season drizzle,[28] and yet having to act as though you don't mind any of it, that is an unhappiness that has no equal.

"Prostitutes' shared penchant for money exists only in the words of thoughtless people. The only reason they're so eager for it is that they get to keep only one tenth of the fees and gifts they receive, with everything else going to their masters. This is not to say that, sometimes, a client doesn't show the depths of his affection for a woman by gifting her the softness of a beautiful

24 A bond between husband and wife that does not allow the woman to give herself to any man other than her husband. [NK 97]

25 Reference to a summer festival around the Tsukuma Shrine 筑摩神社 in the town of Maibara 米原, Sakata 坂田 County, Shiga Prefecture (originally taking place on the first day of the fourth month, later moved to the first day of the horse in the second month). At this festival, women parishioners would put as many earthenware cooking pots on their heads as the number of men they'd slept with, and then give these pots in offering to the shrine deity's palanquin. Also called the Pot Festival (*nabe matsuri* 鍋祭). [NK 97]

26 Reference to a summer festival around the Usaka Shrine 鵜坂神社 in the town of Fuchū 婦中, Nei 婦負 County, Toyama Prefecture (formerly taking place on the sixteenth day of the fifth month). At this festival the shrine priest, using a thin branch from the sacred *sakaki* 榊 tree for a rod, struck the backsides of women parishioners once for every man they'd had. Also called the Backside-Strike Festival (*shiriuchi matsuri* 尻打祭). [NK 97]

27 The feeling of wanting to become a lawfully wedded wife. [NK 98]

28 The reference here, as Noma Kōshin indicates, is a poem in the *Shin kokin wakashū* 新古今和歌集 (New Collection of Ancient and Modern Japanese Poems), located in the first chapter of love poems. The poem in question, number 1,030 in the anthology, is as follows:

As to what my love is like: it is like the wind gusting over Makuzu Field, while cold-season drizzle dyes the pines
わが恋は松を時雨の染めかねて真葛が原に風さわぐなり
wa ga koi wa / matsu o shigure no / somekanete / Makuzugahara ni / kaze sawagu nari

This poem, then, describes a bleak, unhappy state of mind, which the narrator likens to that of a prostitute. Minemura, *Shin kokin wakashū*, p. 320; translation by author.

robe, by having exquisite rare incense delivered to her door, or by sending her money in the form of yellow objects, solid and heavy, whether they're egg-shaped or small and angular.[29] Even though it isn't true that women are in love with money, it's not the case either that they're not aware of how unwise it would be to throw aside the care for them shown by such gifts, and so there are plenty of examples out there of prostitutes eagerly attaching themselves to the men who give them. This habit of theirs will make slanderers say that 'those whores, money is all they yield to,' but it just isn't true! But let's say that it is and that they do yield to money. It's a basic truth of love found on the path of passion that there is no deeper token of it than to give away one's life. Now, there are countless people out there who lose their lives for the sake of wealth. They'll say that the riches they've come to know are worth more than their lives, if you can believe that. When they throw those riches away for her, how could any woman not love them for it? It's the same thing, after all, as giving her their lives.

"Don't take this to mean that women take from men mindlessly. When a client sends her presents, a prostitute is far more likely to adopt a pose of more-or-less indifference instead, a technique she uses because she cannot outright say no to his advances. When a man's fortune has been ground down to nothing, a woman won't just up and sweep away her feelings for him, but her lack of a steady support base, floating reed that she is, puts her as far out of reach as though she lived among the clouds, all without her ever taking a step. So it's not the case that she follows you as long as you have money and turns her back on you once the money runs out. Instead, it's the man himself who, ashamed of his position, breaks the oaths he swore her, and she is not to blame for this."

The young man nodded. "You're completely right. I've been a steady customer of the quarter for a long time, and I've seen a lot of women, and for most of them, you can tell that they meet with particular men because they rely on the care those men provide, at least that's what it looks like to me, but most of those who, like me, visit the quarter as clients will almost never notice this. A man may be so determined to get his love across that he'll visit her enough times to leave a thousand spindle-tree branches,[30] but when the thin, fine cloth over a woman's feelings keeps their hearts apart, then the pain of unrequited love will give him the idea that her affections are given elsewhere, up among the clouds above, and that she is a woman who, even though she's right there before his eyes, is as impossible to take hold of as the *katsura* tree in the moon. And all he is left with is a longing for a heart he can never hope to win. What should he do to free himself from this longing?"

The old man answered, "What you describe is the kind of bitterness that comes out of the shallowness of a man's feelings. By and large, when someone submerges himself in the pool of love and the river of tears turns out to run too deep, he'll think it's because his partner won't return his affections the way he wants her to, but this is no justifiable cause for feeling bitter. It's because of the shallowness of the love found in the hearts of us men that even the slightest reserve on the part of the woman becomes cause for complaint. When he confesses genuine deep love and his partner does not sound sufficiently enthusiastic in response, he'll put it in his head that she dislikes him, that she hates him, and he'll say, 'All I'm trying to do is make you see that when I give my whole heart to somebody, I mean it down to the ends of my obi, and that my feelings will never change! Can't you understand that?' When that happens, how could the woman not know how he feels? In the end, it's when a heart is utterly overcome and overwhelmed by a woman's charms that bitterness is born and that there will be worrying without end.

"If you forced me to state the principles of the way of love, I would say that the greatest possible foolishness is believing that a prostitute is ever truly *your* woman. A mind that sees her as such will give rise to all kinds of lamentings, resentments, and dissatisfactions, so what a man should do is be happy to meet with her those times when they can meet, and not feel regret at not meeting with her when they can't. A man who, while his heart is in a lovestruck state, experiences times when he can

29 This refers to money. The egg-shaped coins are gold, worth one *ryō* 両. The small and angular ones are small oblongs, worth one and a half *bu* 分 (also called *hitokado* 一角 or "single-corners"). [NK 99] Segawa-Seigle, p. xiii, notes that four *bu* equalled one *ryō*.

30 A piece of spindle-tree wood, painted in five colors and some thirty centimeters in length. According to an old Ōshū 奥州 folk custom, when a man wanted to meet with a woman, he would place such a piece of wood before the gate of her house. If she decided to grant his request, she would take the wood into the house. If she did not do this, then the man would add another piece of wood to the first, up to a limit of one thousand. *Kōjien*, 6th edition, s.v. "*nishikigi* 錦木."

be intimate with his woman as pleasant and delightful, and who, when he comes to his senses, parts from her and goes home while thinking of the encounter as yesterday's dream; such a man, I say, may be said to have attained the highest level of quarter expertise," said the old man, wrinkling up his nose.

The young man said, "What you're saying now goes against what you said before. 'A prostitute is not a cold-hearted creature and tells no lies,' you said, using pretty words that made you sound like an ally to them, being endlessly argumentative, putting down men as 'good-for-nothings,' and then flattering and glorifying women with phrases like 'incomparable creatures.' But now, after singing their praises like that, you do a complete turnabout and get all preachy like 'Don't you trust in prostitutes ever being *our* women.' How can you flat-out contradict yourself like that?"

The old man answered, "It's natural for you to think that, but what I said earlier was meant as an explanation for the kind of dull-witted people who claim that prostitutes are deceitful and cold as to why what they say is wrong. My statement just now, on the other hand, was intended as a warning for those who, traveled far on the way of love, court disaster and call suffering down on their heads.

"Speaking in general, this way of love is one that you never abandon, from the days when you're still barely out of childhood until the time your hair is gone and you need a walking stick, and that is an amazing thing. However, if all this endless pleasure-seeking does is build up a lifetime's worth of regret on a moment's worth of enjoyment, how can anyone call it a good thing? Still, mind you, this warning of mine is not meant for those who are able to keep themselves warm and their households in comfort and who have the means to do as they please in everything. I'm speaking as I do because we're living in a world where there are those, right before our eyes, who, dragged along by their hot young blood, beg to have a duplicate key to their parents' secret money box, use unforgivable ploys to get their way, and eventually sink into the muck of debt. Because this is the way these things go, with the case of a man taking his leave from a prostitute without love for her being an example of oaths meant for eternity turning into nothing, it becomes a simple truth about love found on this path that you cannot prosper unless you throw it aside. But, since visits to the quarter help relieve the daily grind, it's not the case either that you shouldn't ever go there. Things go south only when you're not aware of your own weakness or the shaky state of your wallet and you go to find that relief again and again, because then you'll hit rock bottom with no hope of ever climbing up again, and that is one sad situation to be in.

"Now let me list the reasons why the company of prostitutes is so pleasant and enjoyable. First, say you've more or less got things in order at home. You go up to your bearers and say, 'I don't care what time it is, make this palanquin move and move it fast.' 'Ho!' they'll say, and in the twinkling of an eye, they'll bring the palanquin up to you. You get right in, draw the blinds and box yourself in, and the way this makes your heart race is so nice! The men are sweating like pigs as they run along, but you're still seething with annoyance that they can't go any faster, so when you pass by the livery stable on the corner of Ōmiya,[31] then even though the place's appearance has changed from what it was before, the joy you feel when you see it, because it tells you the way is getting shorter, is another delight. Even with their agonizing slowness, when your bearers carry you up to the teahouse at Tanbaguchi,[32] you smooth your sideburns and adjust your obi, and the air of calm that you assume then is the sweetest thing in the world.

"Next you put on the bamboo hat that hides your face, pull it down far, and get off the main road, and I don't even need to explain the joy you feel when you behold the buildings of the quarter. You follow the narrow footpath that runs between the fields,[33] getting soaked by the dew on the rice plants' leaves, and from the moment you reach the path called Emon-no-baba,[34] the

31 There may have been a livery stable at the corner of Ōmiya 大宮 Way, at the entrance to Tanba 丹波 Highway Town. [NK 101]

32 There was a teahouse at Tanbaguchi 丹波口 Teahouse Town (that part of Tanba Highway Town entered on the town's west side by Ōmiya Way). One could leave the palanquin and take a rest here. [NK 101–102]

33 Upon leaving Tanba Highway Town, one entered a path among the rice paddies. Going down it southward and turning to the west, one would arrive at Emon-no-baba 衣紋の馬場, at the westernmost tip of Shimabara. The stretch of way from here to the Great Gate (*daimon* 大門) was called the Shujaka 朱雀 Footpath. Having reached Emon-no-baba, from the first block cut across by Ikkanmachi 一貫町 Way, one would follow a paddy path westward and come to a shortcut to the Great Gate. This was called the New Shujaka Footpath. It corresponds to today's Hanayamachi 花屋町 Way. [NK 102]

34 A field path, once situated to the north of present-day Ebisu-no-banba-chō 夷馬場町, running along the licensed quarter's earthen wall and leading to the Great Gate. So called because it was where customers of the quarter refurbished their crests (*emon* 衣紋). [NK 102] According to the *Kōjien* (6th edition), "to

people of the Rumorville Teahouse[35] will know it, spot you right away, and display the most pleasing attitudes as they come trailing after you, and it's lovely. You're sauntering along the east-west central road through the quarter, and a popular courtesan, as if she recognizes you, sends you a smile, or says something to you like, 'Who might your chosen companion be?' To receive her gracious words like this is truly a memory for life!

"When you enter the district of the houses of assignation[36] and go into a house you know, no sooner have you crossed the threshold than a clear voice says, 'Oh, welcome, welcome!' This, too, is delightful. Then when you go up to the second floor and take off the bamboo hat, and then someone comes in carrying a cup of saké, it's not bad at all. 'Send someone to call his honorable mistress here!' you'll hear a voice say, and though the voice is quiet, even hearing it so faintly is a joy. Then the mistress of the establishment comes in and asks, 'What would you like with your drink?' and even her air of servility is agreeable. After a short while, from the courtesan's private chamber at the house, you hear the rustle of fabric and you don't know what's going on, but then you hear the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs and your heart begins to beat faster. All of a sudden she appears and steps into the room, the robe she has so sweetly put on close to slipping off her shoulder, skin showing through white as snow, and her obi, too, looking as if it's about to come undone. There she stands in the doorway, and when your and her eyes meet, believe me, your heart beats faster still. 'Your saké cup is not quite full,' she'll say, and when she presses her delicate hand to your neck, just being allowed to feel the weight of it, slight as dew on thin reeds, is so pleasing in its charm. While you converse about this and that, the refinement of her wit is such that merely calling it pleasant does not come close to doing it justice.

"When you get into the bed and lie there waiting, that she's neither too slow nor too fast in coming to you but times it just right is again a joy. When your regret at having to put an end to your meeting, a feeling for which there are no words, comes to clog up your chest, the soothing attitude on the part of the woman comes across as so youthful that the happiness it awakens delights you beyond compare. With all her heart she swears an oath for the future, but whatever gods she names, Japan is too small for her purpose, so she goes as far as to swear by anything with a whiff of Buddhism found in other lands, and she repeats over and over again, 'I'll let go of you only in the cauldrons of hell,' and then when she gives you her pinkie promise, what a joy is this! And then she unties her obi and presses herself close to you, and a priceless scent at once comes floating up. Saying that your heart pounds at it is a massive understatement, and you realize that, just like this, you could die. And even the doing of things that no picture could capture is somehow at the same time delightful and shameful.

"The parting under a darkening sky is an illustration of how there is no gatekeeper in the western mountains, and when pale-ink evening comes, then, feeling cold, you separate out your clothes, and then having her accompany you to the gate is pleasant, but the separation hurts. Now even though the way of love is such a sweet pastime, you contemplate your meeting deep in your heart as you set out for home, climbing into your palanquin and heading in a hurry to the north. In that moment, your heart stays behind even while your body is in the vehicle. The wretchedness of the pain in your heart as you fret over affairs at home is something that cannot be put into words."

When he had finished speaking, the old man and the young one separated at a crossroads and disappeared from my sight. I do not know where they went.

- *Grass for Kindling*, end

Charred Sticks

In the fifth month of the year, when there was no break in the rain, I was shut up at home in a state of gloom. I could see no sign of summer coming, and even the grass at the foot of the hedges surrounding the house where I lived, alone, was drenched with dew. Even

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refurbish one's crest" (*emon o tsukurou* 衣紋を繕う) means to tidy one's disordered clothes and apparel.

35 *Uwasamachi no chaya* 噂町の茶屋. The teahouse at the Exit (Deguchi 出口). The place where one entered the Great Gate was called, in Shimabara, the Exit, and there was a tea-and-drinks shop there. In the daytime, however, and only then, it was possible to summon low-ranking prostitutes there. Because there was such dense traffic of Shimabara clients going in and out, anything that happened within the quarter would immediately become a topic of conversation at this place. [NK 102] Noma Kōshin specifies further on that these low-ranking ladies were below the rank of *kakoi* 鹿恋, third-rank courtesans. [NK 124]

36 This district, located on the left side of the western end of the east-west central road, was composed entirely of houses of assignation where one could summon prostitutes of the third rank or higher. [NK 103]

just rolling over for a nap on the sedge mat would set the water oozing out of it, and the endlessly dripping skies had me down to the bone. The sheer extent of the clouds hanging thickly overhead, together with the loneliness of evening, made it unusually hard for me to get my spirits back up, but right at that moment, when the moon of my own heart was on the verge of clouding over, I received a visit from an outspoken young man. After we'd finished exchanging both amusing and trivial gossip, he said, "Oh wait, that reminds me! I heard about a book, 'Grass for Kindling' or somesuch, that was supposedly about your having gone to the quarter sometime in the past, so I got hold of it from someone the other day and read it the gods know how many times, but I have to say there are a couple of passages in there that don't sit well with me. On top of that, there are many stories to be heard from faraway China, and not a few closer to home in Japan itself, giving examples of the way of passion leading to disaster, even from ancient times. Even if a warning like the one in your book were to reach every single man, when even one among them, giving himself airs as if he knows all about the way of love, has his heart flame up, hotter and hotter, with the fires of a young man in his prime *because* of your book, then all you'll have accomplished is kindling the amorous grass even more thoroughly. It's a misguided thing to do, and it's almost impossible to make sense of why you did it!"

I answered, "I may have forgotten many things over the years, and when I look back on my past now, I know that talking about it will make me seem half-baked at best, but that 'Kindling' now... A little over four years ago,[37] on my way back home from a place called Nishino-oka,[38] I committed to memory the stories told by two people I was following. Indulging in a bit of idle fun, I wrote those stories down in a moment of whimsy, but even though I considered scratching them out and throwing them away, I didn't go through with it. Eventually, it seems, my writings made their way out into the world, and I cannot tell you how much this embarrasses me.

"In any case, I suppose that now curiosity will compel you to have me clarify the things I wrote in that little scroll, but since I did nothing but faithfully put down on paper what those two people said, how on earth would I have an understanding of everything in there down to the least, most insignificant detail? Regardless, since you speak as you do from a frank heart, and because it would pain me greatly to appear like a complete idiot in your eyes, I have no choice but to try and give you at least approximate answers. As you said just now, commandments against the way of passion are found even in the revered writings of the great Buddha, where He rails against it in terms that could freeze the blood. For example, He will explain that 'woman is an envoy from hell' or condemn women for 'having the faces of bodhisattvas but the hearts of *yaksha* demons.'[39] As if that weren't enough, you've got the five moral precepts of the reverend Mencius, and if you enjoy playing the pedant, you can draw quotations from the strangest, most amazing stories and ancient texts of China and Japan, and like a true know-it-all spout out warnings more numerous than there are forks in roads and more mixed up than tangled ends of white string. And yet, even taking into account the existence of all such writings, for you to so completely loathe the liking that I, just one man, feel for this way of love, and to have a mindset capable of such misgivings, is admirable to the highest degree. But no matter what my own tastes may be, I am not saying that giving yourself up wholesale to being flummoxed by passion and so losing your home and ruining yourself is a good thing. And yet, this way of love, with its foundation in a jade saké cup, is one that men must walk, and so we can say that a man who does not understand the tragedy inherent in life will never become a man of feeling if he does not go down this road. So all I'm saying is, don't reject it and don't overindulge, and in doing so, you will gain insight into the workings of love between people. Don't be too stubborn in how you choose to understand."

The young man answered sharply, "Oh yes, I will be! Among prostitutes, when there's a cold one, there's less that's real about her than there is about a woman in a

37 This may have been the end of the Kanbun 寛文 (1661–1673) or the beginning of the Enpō 延宝 era (1673–1681). [NK 104]

38 The area around the present-day city of Nagaokakyō. [NK 104]

39 "Spirits of the dead who fly about in the night. Demons in the earth, or in the air, or in the lower heavens; they are malignant, and violent, and devourers (of human flesh). One of the eight kinds of spiritual beings who appear in Buddhist scriptures" (*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, hereafter DDB, drawing on the *Pāli yakkha*; http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/). It is clear that such a negative interpretation of the *yaksha* is intended here, even though both the DDB and the *Kōjien* (6th edition, s.v. "*yasha* 夜叉") note that such entities are by no means unfailingly malevolent.

painting. She'll sicken your mind with immorality, and as sure as two and two make four, you will doom yourself. There is *no* getting around that. That you, knowing this, set yourself up as their defender and write that 'falsehood lies with men and not with women' must mean that you're either connected to the quarter or a close friend of a house of assignation. Either way, the only plausible conclusion is that you wrote this for their gain. That you're trying to send decent-living people off down that evil path makes you into a despicable person to a young man like me."

I answered, "What you say is just another piece of foolishness. I am not in league with the quarter or with any house of assignation, and I am not a friend to them either. I am not so shady a character as that. And even if I *were* an all-out champion of their cause, well, even if I could successfully state deer to be horses or argue that crows were snowy herons, I could not make a person not so inclined throw themselves into debauchery all of a sudden. Conversely, if I hated the way of love and, like a pompous twit, fell to saying things like, 'Prostitutes are more terrible than tiger beetles and more horribly poisonous than arsenic,' and then shut myself up in bitterness and went around roaring in outrage with a face like a sour plum, then those already under the influence would say in disgust, 'You got some nerve, you contrary old buzzard. Don't you know that even poisonous medicine can change and become a source of healing? This play of ours is what makes our lives bearable. It's the cool breeze from the houses of assignation that sweeps away the worms of misery and low spirits. Is a know-nothing grouch like you going to peep at the sky through a keyhole? When you fix your sights on Mt. Fuji from the sea at Tsukushi, do your eyes suddenly turn into telescopes?'[40] No, no, if I did that, they'd just go ramping up the amorousness even more. People who leap around as the horses in their hearts dictate *will* leap around no matter what, so I'm not saying any of this for anybody's benefit. Like the water of a mountain stream becomes troubled when you touch it, so the state of the world cannot go back to what it was. There was a time when I too, at Otokoyama, had my hair shaved into a half-moon shape, but because I know that those days are gone,[41] I composed that text for myself alone. And should it happen because of this that someone says to me, 'Oh, not this again! Haven't you learned anything from past mistakes?,' then I, who am supposed to provide an answer to their reproaches, rough-mannered as I am, will be just the kind of person to say, 'Ah, nuts to you!' But, say what you will, words once spoken will not suddenly evaporate even if you hold them to a fire built with 'Kindling,' and so, even though I'll be repeating what I wrote, I *will* give you exact answers.

"While I did state that 'falsehood lies with men and not with women,' you shouldn't go for a one-sided interpretation of this. Because they're prostitutes and don't observe the spousal commandment against falsehood, they can hardly be expected not to tell lies. But there are many people out there who, to keep their covert visits to the quarter a secret, will cover up those visits with absolute denial. They will tell nothing but lies to everybody, and deceive others to such a degree that it makes you wonder if they aren't foxes or raccoon dogs. Prostitutes, on the other hand, do not deceive people like that, and it's because I wanted it to be known that they're not all about lies and deceit that I got up on my high horse and wrote that 'falsehood lies with men and not with women.'

"What is called the deceptiveness of prostitutes is not the kind that deceives people willy-nilly in order to cause them harm while benefiting the prostitutes themselves. What makes a prostitute's work so sad is that, when occasion demands, she is made to swear oaths stipulating that, if they are broken, she will suffer from 'rotting leprosy' and 'viscous leprosy' and will make a living begging alms. Though they look like out-and-out fabrications, such oaths in actuality help to clear away the mistrust in a client's mind and the uncertainties in his heart, and so they make for quite a pleasant bond between the pair. Her intention, then, never mind what the consequences for herself will be, is to soothe the man's anger right there and then, and so the feelings with which she swears her false oaths, disregarding any punishment to herself, are deeply affectionate and sweet, despite the lie. At times, the purity of a true heart is clearer than the waters by a riverbank where yellow roses bloom, but when it is made to draw upon itself the dirt of human words, it comes to look like the shallow center of a muddy inlet. As soon as that happens, in

40 The meaning is that someone overconfidently claims to be able to see something that is unlikely to be visible. [NK 106]

41 Meaning that he too once had his hair shaved into a half-moon shape and tied into a dandy's hairstyle. He is talking about the time before he retreated from the world and shaved off all his hair. [NK 106]

order to prove that these suspicions about her feelings are unfounded, she'll call upon any gods you care to name and write the words of her oath right before the eyes of the terrible crow,[42] wring out her thumb and paint the contract with her blood.[43] 'Clear or muddy, the gods will know!' she'll say, and what else could this possibly be than a sign that she truly calls upon those gods? Taking all this into account, how could any man find fault with her even if she wrote over a thousand such contracts, since her actions leave him free of sadness?

"Really, when a man, in his lovestruck state, all of a sudden feels bitter because of something the woman has said or done, he'll generally start mixing in lies with his conversation and eventually, contrary to reason, he'll be the one to show signs of anger. He'll think to himself that the feebleness of the woman's heart is what ruins his mood, but he can't actually say it, so he'll suppress his feelings and control himself, while inside he'll be boiling over with jealous rage. Yet even when bitter feelings flare up like this because of a woman, it's a rare thing for an oath to be sworn and a contract written upon the man's insistence, precisely because of this impossibility of expressing his thoughts as forcefully as he'd like. At this point in the proceedings, even though there is little falsehood on the part of the man and there are many lies on the part of the woman, in the end the man and no other is the starting point from which the lying begins. Fools will think, 'Because a prostitute, fundamentally, is weak for money, she doesn't care if her client is a man who's had his nose cut off, a cripple dragging his stiff leg, someone blind as a bat, a despicable Easterner, or a coarse old monk. As long as there's money to be made, she'll come a-running full of beans!' Because this is the way they see her, such people will belittle and despise her, saying things like, 'Just look at that *tayū*'s pompous face!' or 'That *tenjin*'s stuck-up air, unbelievable!' well before they ever actually get to know her. But then, when you meet with her for the first time, you find she's not like that at all, being instead a genteel, pliant creature, whose face and figure in no way resemble an ordinary woman's. Her manner when speaking conveys her high character and the greatness of her position is more than that of Mt. Tai, so that the sum you gave to see her comes to feel lighter than the feather of a goose. You're made to be inescapably aware of your own innate inferiority and the lowliness of your position, so that merely sitting across from her makes you ashamed of how unpresentable you are. It blocks up your chest, and you pick at the edges of the tatami mat and mess them up while you talk. Meanwhile, in the course of conversation, she piles up lovelike falsehoods, illustrating them with the expressions of her face and body, and little by little she comes to display before your eyes the mountain of heartache that love has in store for you. The evident lovingness of the woman's heart makes you give in to the lie and accept it as though it were the truth. Even when a man is so ugly he shouldn't be seen in the daylight, she will be softened by compassion and give in to him.

"So, we can say that all this falsehood gets underway because of the man, not the woman, and this is something you ought to spend some time thinking about."

The young man said, "Yes, your reasoning sounds about right. But be that as it may, when she writes false contracts, or when she cuts off hair and pulls out fingernails, or even cuts into her finger,[44] there tends to be little true feeling in it. You may look at her and marvel at the depth of her affections, as it appears to you, but the instant the man's money runs out, she starts acting like she doesn't even know his name. Why is this?"

I answered, "How can you possibly believe that cutting off hair, pulling out fingernails, and even cutting fingers is all done for the sake of deceit? There are all sorts of reasons for these kinds of actions. Sometimes, a man will pray for a love that lasts a thousand generations, but when you think about it, it's inevitable that the storm that drew you in the night before will turn into nothing more than dew in the morning, because that is the way of this fleeting world. A woman may have her mind made up that there is a dead limit to

42 The treasure seal of the Ox King (Goō 牛王) of Kumano 熊野 bears the image of the crow that is the messenger of the gods. It was a secret teaching among prostitutes that, when the Ox King of Kumano was invoked for an oath contract, avoiding the eyes of the crow would spare one from the punishment for breach of contract. The opposite of this custom is here used to indicate an earnest oath. [NK 107]

43 When using a seal of her own blood as a signature on an oath contract, a woman would use blood from the middle or third finger of her right hand. Cases are also known of "blood documents" (*chibumi* 血文) where the words of the oath were written in blood. These carried more weight than ordinary contracts. [NK 107]

44 Along with oaths and oath contracts, these were methods by which a prostitute could prove the sincerity of her affection. However, these methods were sometimes used as wiles, and are to be understood so here. [NK 108]

what she will do for her job, but when a man craves the realization of something that only exists in baseless rumors and it gets to the point where he laments about not having it, then she herself will with her own hands cut into her hair. Cases of a woman showing her undisguised feelings by acting the pure lady like this may be very rare among prostitutes, but that doesn't mean they never occur. Another thing that can happen is that a man whom she's been meeting with for the longest time, falls to harping on a slight thing she said or did, gets himself worked up over it again and again, and finally says in anger, 'From now on, our vows are no more. By heaven, now that we've fallen out of love, are we still going to keep on meeting until the stars drop from the sky? Ha! This is the end of our relationship.' When he says this, a man to whom she's been bound so tight and for so long that it puts you in mind of an iron chain, the knowledge that the bond she has with him is about to be severed for no good reason at all is a source of crushing sorrow to her, but since she has no way of displaying her hidden heart in her face, she with no sign of regret cuts deep into her own black hair, dark as jet, of which the poet says, 'My mother said it must be so!'[45] She winds the cut-off strands around a letter, says, 'Then this is it,' and hands it over as if she were placing Ama-no-kawa before that Heijū's eyes.[46] There have been examples, you can take my word for it, of women using their hair as a comb to work the tangles out of a man like this. It may also be that, instead of two or three, a woman has only a single lover whom she clings to, but that man may harbor serious doubts about this and think to himself, 'She's bound to be like this with men other than me. No matter how anybody says it's because she has to do her job in a way that makes it look like she's in love with everyone, she really is just a working girl you can't have faith in. You can never truly get to the bottom of the waters of her heart, hard to contain as they are. If there were a way to stand hidden in every corner of a person's heart and see its workings, then of course it would be possible to clear away these doubts, but she's a woman more likely than the smoke from the salt-making by the women divers of Suma to yield in directions where she feels no affection.' When, through thoughts like these, his heart reaches the highest pitch of suspicion, then this pains her and hurts her to the marrow because she wants, no matter what it takes, to make him see the pure feelings deep down in her heart. When she therefore decides that she will not stand for her affections, anything but slight, to be considered barely even real, then she will pull out fingernails and cut fingers and make them into lights in the darkness of his doubts and so melt away the ice over the man's heart, and this kind of thing happens all the time. It can also happen that she meets with a man she doesn't care for, a loudmouthed big spender who'll say, 'Special expenses on feast days?[47] Psh, those are nothing!' and take them on himself; someone who, lowbred though he is, has the kind of financial clout that lets him compare his wealth to other people's and say, 'It's a material world, baby!'; who, where the question of a future safe haven for a prostitute in the form of marriage is concerned, will say, 'Oh, sure, sure!' and swear oaths with great enthusiasm; but who'll kick up a fuss as soon

45 The reference, so Noma Kōshin informs us, is to a poem from the third chapter of sundry compositions in the *Gosen wakashū* 後選和歌集 (Later Collection of Japanese Poems). To be precise, the poem is number 1240 in that work, and it is as follows:

Why is it, I wonder, that my mother said, "It must be so!" and never once stroked my jet-black hair?
たらちめはかかれとてしもむばたまの我が黒髪を撫でずや有りけん
tarachime wa / kakare to te shimo / mubatama no / wa ga kurokami o / nadezu ya ariken)

This appears to be a simple reference to a poem describing a woman's hair. Katagiri, *Gosen wakashū*, pp. 374–75; translation by author.

46 Heijū 平中 is an alternate name of Taira no Sadabun 平貞文, a womanizer in the age of the Heian court. From section 38 of *Heijū monogatari* 平中物語 (The Tale of Heijū): "When I peeked inside, the woman was there. I saw her take out a letter, around which she wrapped a lock of her hair. When I, finding this strange, read the letter, tears came to my eyes, even though I had already heard that [the poetess] Ama-no-kawa 天の川 had passed away. When I thought of how she was supposed to have become a nun, blackness rose before me." [NK 109] For more about Taira no Sadabun, see Susan Downing Videen's *Tales of Heichū*. Note that *Moekui* provides the spelling "Heijū" へいじう instead of "Heichū" へいちゅう.

47 As explained by Segawa-Seigle: "It should be emphasized, however, that such pampering [as described above] did not assure the courtesans of happiness, for the Yoshiwara system kept them in hopeless debt despite their lavish life-style. Among other things, all courtesans and prostitutes, regardless of their rank, had particularly heavy financial pressures on fete days called *monbi* [紋日]. On a *monbi* (one to six times every month), their prices doubled and the courtesans had to secure appointments with clients in advance. Every courtesan had a daily quota, the only exceptions being three official holidays in a year. When a courtesan or prostitute missed a day's work for any reason, even a death in the family or her own illness, she was required to meet that day's quota from her own funds. On *monbi*, the penalty was doubled. The courtesan therefore had to secure clients at all cost lest her debt to the bordello increase and her term of service be lengthened." Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, pp. 78–80.

as a fly buzzes by and corner that woman into inflicting pain on herself. When that happens, even though he's a pest she can barely stand and she's only doing it because it's her job, she'll slice the tip off a finger and trim away a nail.

"Now, it may appear that her underlying motivations in all these cases are despicable, but she is really so tired of the horrible, sad tasks she has to perform in her job. Yet even when she finds herself wishing for even a moment's peace from the world, the fact remains that she could hardly make it through a single day without the kind of supporting partner I just described, and so she has no other option than to cut up and sell herself whether she likes it or not. Say what you will, but being in such a position is, by the gods, a way of life so sad that it could make people cry to the point where their sleeves wouldn't dry anymore. Or take another case. Say there's a man of limited intelligence who, as is typical, has a luxurious home, can keep himself warm, and can do whatever he pleases. As the number of meetings with him builds up, the prostitute, though her choice of conduct in the matter is not her own, offers herself to him, despite not finding him all that endearing, simply because to do so is customary in her line of work. Yet while she submits so completely that it borders on being his puppet, this man still is not satisfied. With a rush of blood to his brain, he puts it in his head that he wants a tangible token of her love. Sometimes, he'll declare a molehill to be a mountain, or turn a tiny failing on her part into a huge production and go around shouting and berating her. Then she, the picture of calm, will say, 'No matter with how much anger you may speak, even the frightful Asura kings could not contrive to hide the unclouded moon of my affection. Even the thundering gods high in their cloudy home could not ever take away my heart, you see.' When, with beautiful words like these, and without losing the color in her cheeks, she is able in this charming, ladylike way to make him listen to reason, then the man, at a loss yet still planning what to do next, says, 'That may be, but while you, acting as if you care about me, have servants bring me food and drink and things, your undersash, sure sign of your feelings that it is, will not loosen, and your eyebrows do not itch,[48] so what am I supposed to take for a signpost in the sea of your affections? If you genuinely care for me, then give me a sign! Writing a contract is something everybody does and cutting hair is not something that prostitutes mind doing.' When he gets like this, nastier than a bitter potato and stickier than grated yam, having no other way out, she'll briskly do as he desires, be it with a nail or with a finger. A woman forced to meet with a man like that is someone who suffers under her bad, sad karma. Having to, in sadness, injure the body her parents gifted her at birth makes for a regret that never fades. No matter how much she laments it, it will happen again, over and over, and that is why her situation, with her job, is so pitiable. Meanwhile the man, having come to look forward to such things from the prostitute who is silently grieving for herself, is happy that he has managed to force her into this, and no matter how many times it happens, he does not feel any of the shame he should. Causing pain for another and making them suffer while rejoicing in what you do is a deviation from the path of kindness followed by human beings worthy of the name.

"It's the unlucky tendency of men like that to have their fortunes blown away more easily than an airborne kite waiting for the wind. Even a man who makes a prostitute give him a love token in the way I described, shouting out his importance at the height of his glory, will one day encounter his limit. When the voice he shouts with has faded and he walks as unsteadily as a man in need of being wheeled around, and the prostitute he used to go and see does indeed act like she doesn't even know his name, well, even if you suspect inborn coldness to be a factor, you can't very well insist that such coldness is the only reason for her behavior. Another thing. Suppose there's a man who, when a woman swears her feelings won't change even after a thousand years, acts as if she's his property and he's the gatekeeper barring her from meeting other men. A man like that, even though his face is so heavy with seriousness you'd think it weighed a million pounds, will before he knows it see his fortune washed away and end up with nowhere left to turn. When that happens, the prostitute, fed up, will say, 'Well, my, my! Sure, though you could say that this is just an example of the fickleness of fortune, he should still have seen it coming that this would end up happening to him, but no, up until this very day he's been the kind of audacious wannabe big-shot twit who stops just short of shouting, "Hey hey, here I am!" A naïve fool, that's what he is, and a crook! He's not a god, yet he didn't realize he's only human, and I am ashamed to have ever met with him. People may think it's to be expected from some-

48 It was believed that one's eyebrows would itch when a waited-for person arrived. [NK 111]

body like me to talk like this, but it makes me sick to think I spent so much time giving myself to a man who can't tell up from down yet still thinks he's swimming in cash! After this one, how could there possibly be anything left out there to hurt my reputation?' As you can see, undergoing the treatment she does naturally makes her block off the affectionateness required by her job, regret the past, and look up at the clouds above, lost in her thoughts. This, again, is the way of things, for a prostitute. Even when a man, just because she is a prostitute, grinds a woman's self away to nothing, yet, because his is not a heart that prides itself on daily excess, visits her with moderation without doing away with her services entirely, his fortune will still, before he knows it, melt away. From the corners of the rice cabinet, cobwebs will start tangling out, and in the run-down house, the hearth will burn weaker than the light of fireflies. Yet even with his financial situation so bad, thoughts of the way of love are difficult for him to shake off and the affections of prostitutes hard to forget. His situation is altogether hopeless, dependent as he is on government-organized soup kitchens, and so he thinks to himself that if he's going to turn into a beggar whom everybody speaks badly of, so be it. He throws his old life away wholesale and flees the city, intending to become one of those seeking to realize their long-cherished desire for rebirth in the Pure Land, but how can he let go of the worldly intimacy with women and pass his days without appearing to even know what it is? Because she is like a bird in a cage or a fish in a breeding tank, he cannot practice begging together with her. If she had her freedom, would they not put their begging bowls by the same pillow, use their patched-up sleeves for a mat, and sleep together under some bridge or other? A prostitute is someone who understands such feelings of love to the core.

"When it comes to making do with what meager riches you have, there are so many ways to do it that it's hard to decide on just a single one, but when a man loses all his money, it would be unfair to claim that a prostitute inevitably ceases to have any regard for him."

The young man nodded vigorously. "Ah, well said! So here's another question. In 'Kindling,' you argue with all the conviction you have that 'prostitutes do not yield to riches.' If that is true, then to what *do* they yield?"

I answered, "If you fully agree that 'prostitutes do not yield to riches,' yet at the same time have misgivings as to what they do yield to, it is possible for me to answer. But first I'd like to know, could it be that you're having a nasty suspicion that I, knowing full well that prostitutes do in fact yield to riches, argue with bull-headed determination that they don't, and that I have spells where I act like their dogged defender and that's why I speak the way I do, and that you are now putting on the bite of sarcasm when you ask, 'Then to what *do* they yield?' Either way, I'll begin my answer with the following outline.

"Speaking in general, it's not the case that prostitutes *don't* yield to riches, but it's not the case either that they're inclined in this direction by definition. Though it is indeed correct to state that they do yield to riches to a slight degree, and though it's clear that this has nothing to do with their client's personal attractiveness, with his being old or young or intelligent or foolish, it's only because it's part of what a prostitute does, part of her job. That said, you could have a man of the kind who wears gold coins next to the skin and is wrapped in layers of brocade, but when a woman secretly thinks he's nothing but a hateful bumpkin, she'll jilt him so hard he'll never even know what hit him. Sometimes, a man will have the infatuation-inducing looks of Hikaru Genji, still apparently popular with people though his name gets nothing but slander to an astonishing degree, and she'll turn up her nose at that man for a stuck-up piece of impudence. And when a what's-his-face can't lay claim to Ariwara no Narihira's tiny waist, she will put him down in only a few words as a short, fat tub, with a wilted stem, no money to his name, and foul-smelling. Sejirō's pommade, Gengobei's toothpaste, boorish, passé![49] You might have a man who is proud of his beauty, thinking himself the pinnacle of male attractiveness, human-born offspring of the gods, firstborn of the incarnated Buddha, but a prostitute's high character is not some cheap thing that's going to get dazzled by the guy's sex appeal. On the other hand, you could have a man with a merchant's neat way of dressing or the appearance of a lowly mountain dweller carrying firewood on his back. Because of their compatible personal qualities and the feelings between them, she thinks up ways to pull the wool over the eyes of the quarter and, you might say, screw cattail spikes

49 Giving their merchandise the names of handsome men of the period, like Sejirō 清十郎 and Gengobei 源五兵衛, was a technique used in advertisements by beauty-product salesmen. [NK 113]

into the women overseers' ears, hoodwinks the fisherman from the bay who serves as a hidden lookout for the quarter, makes fools out of everybody trying to guard Mt. Kurabu,[50] and with her tricks, gets that man for a lover. Such relationships show that a prostitute's heart does not respond to just a man's looks, and so it stands to reason that you can't say she only yields to riches, either.

"Still, no matter if she's of high rank or of low position, when a prostitute is sunk up to the neck in a pool of debt and there are no easy lovers to be had, then she's not likely to ever find a safe place to swim to on any shore.[51] In a situation like that, it'd be pretty strange if she *didn't* have any desire for money. Even despite that, though, it's typical for someone like her that she, as if she were a delicate, refined, pampered palace lady-in-waiting or female attendant, or an empress innocent in the ways of the world, used to acting like a person of rank in all things, that she, I say, even though she is eager for money, will not be the kind of person to make this known by letting it show in her face or shine through in her words. Leaving human beings aside for the moment, even little birds and the countless insects are creatures looking for personal advantage, so it would be unreasonable to expect prostitutes, and only them, to not have any desire for gain. Regardless, their techniques can vary enormously, depending on whether they talk about their financial needs or not. Now when you look at the inner feelings of any prostitute, you'll find that, even on a spring day when the light is peaceful, or on a perfectly still autumn night, her heart is just like New Year's Eve in the twelfth month. The lively aspect of it is because the line of work of someone in her position will one way or another thrive to the highest degree and she'll have many gifts sent to her. The lonely aspect of it is that, on special holidays, as she sits kneeling in a corner behind the lattice,[52] sick at heart, she thinks about the money that'll go into paying her own fees. The money she gets for an object she pawns today, in all kinds of agitation and all sorts of distress, will flow away like the water of the Asuka River. Sad to say, the eternal pool of debt will not turn into a shallow ford, so all the worries she already has piled up grow worse and worse at times like these. With her situation so horrible and sad, as soon as she catches sight of money, she'll inevitably be struck by a longing even more painful to behold than that of a starving dog who wags his tail and begs for food, but she'll act as if this is not the case and say, 'Rice must be around a hundred and twenty *monme* a measure. What rice will I eat now?'[53] With an expression of supreme ignorance, she'll sit there looking vacant, but the mindset with which she gives this performance, the prostitute's basic character, if you will, shouldn't we consider that as a guiding principle for all women?

"With things this way, it's hard to say with any degree of certainty whether prostitutes are drawn in by money or, if not, what it is that they yield to. Just go with the notion that whatever they want to yield to *will* be yielded to, and don't worry too much about what that might be."

At that point the young man clapped his hands together and said, "Everything you said makes complete sense. Honestly, you're the kind of person who'd find a way to talk even if your lips were sewn shut. My doubts, set burning by the fire of 'Kindling,' have been put out by the water of your theories. Now I'd like to hear an outline of what's fun and amusing in that quarter. Please tell me something about that."

I laughed aloud and groaned, "When I think how I spent my days as a lazy good-for-nothing, it shames me to look back on the years, but if I don't dare speak about my past now, it'd obviously be implying I never even saw the quarter, which isn't true. Once upon a time, there were an old man and an old woman. When the old man had gone into the mountains to do laundry and the old woman to the river to gather firewood or

50 Possibly a case of synonym wordplay. According to the *Kōjien* (6th edition), Kurabuyama 暗部山 is an old name for Kuramayama 鞍馬山, as well as an *utamakura* 歌枕 (name of a famous place strongly associated with poetical composition). The characters 暗部 literally mean "dark part." Now, one word for human genitals is "*inbu*" 陰部, literally "shadow part." It may be that the use of the former term, a character-for-character synonym of the latter (which, however, does not generally have the same meaning), is here used to indicate that the people of the quarter are trying to keep the sex worker in question from having unauthorized close contact with a non-paying lover of her choice.

51 That is, to find someone who will offer her permanent support in the form of marriage.

52 Reference to the latticed room at the front of a brothel. When a prostitute was unable to sell her services, she would be forced to sit on display with fellow prostitutes for who knew how long. [NK 114]

53 This prostitute's peasant origins [as evidenced by her choice of words] mean that she knows that even in famine years rice does not cost a hundred and twenty silver *monme* 匁 (two gold *ryō*) a measure, but she is pretending to be ignorant in matters of the world. [NK 115]

somesuch, I, their son, saw the face of opportunity and, thinking I'd have a nice get-together, came to be a regular customer of the quarter and took up with a prostitute for the first time. I've forgotten that person's name. As time went by, I became a figure in paper clothes,[54] yet spending money was still no issue. Rain or shine, romancing was the only thing on my mind. A break of a single day pained me. Times, no matter how short, when I got no letter from my lover shriveled my heart. Anything not about this one thing was in one ear and out the other with me. When I ate, I couldn't taste my food. I tell you, I was like a man out of his mind!

"During that time, interesting things, amusing things, things to make you angry, things to give you pause, sad things, happy things, all sorts, all kinds, were so many that, if I tried to count them all, I wouldn't be able to, and if I put them down on paper, I couldn't read them all. Sometimes, I'll be playing my shamisen, tuned in the *niagari*[55] style, and thinking of the cloth that Oman bleached,[56] and then get the intriguing feeling, to the notes of the *matsuchi* song,[57] of knowing melancholy as deep as the Sumida River. And when I think of how the forbidding faces of a house owner or female overseer would be softened by the mighty glow of money, their expressions, all surface, flipped around in a heartbeat, it makes me laugh. And then, at a meeting you've booked in advance, having traveled such a long distance in a vain quest for an outcome you won't get, while the prostitute is more relaxed than ever, the saké cups are piling up, and you're chatting about this and that, right then, right in the middle of that pleasant intimacy, in the very moment when you think this makes the pleasures of Amida's paradise look like nothing, somebody comes to announce that, 'Mr. So-and-so is here!' And the prostitute, looking as if her heart's about to jump out of her chest, pulls the inkstone toward herself and says, 'He's here! Oh, what wonderful news!' You can't help but notice the movements of her brush and wonder uneasily what it is she may be writing, but while your suspicions are churning in your mind, the house owner or a woman overseer comes in to oh so politely polish your apple, calling you 'my lord' and everything, and when they think the right moment has come, 'We have this shameless little request for you, hahahaha!' they'll say, their laughter fake. 'Because of something something, it's a situation there's just *no* getting out of. Really there's no help for it, and we're afraid we must ask you to leave the premises for today.' They'll say it like a pair of toothless saws that you can't pull through the wood no matter your effort. You try and drill a hole in the other man's skull with your eyes when, with the expression of a beggar, he takes your companion from you while there's absolutely nothing you can do about it, and you're drowning in bitterness about as shallow as the Mogami River... but really there's no point in my even trying to describe the anger you feel at having been so unceremoniously sent packing. Other times, you and your woman will be side by side on the same pillow, and she'll say, 'The sadness of the life my job makes me lead, and that I can never get away from, lies in having been separated from my mother while I was still so young. Ah, I know as little of my brothers' and sisters' whereabouts as if they were in the sky above, wandering among the clouds. If I, all alone, did not have you, then who would be left to me?' When she talks like this, on and on, it's as if the fisherman, line in hand, has come to your pillow,[58] and you, listening to her, find yourself wishing you could prune away the teary branches, and when those tears start to fall, you come to realize to the fullest possible extent the pathos of the world. And here's another thing. You hate not going to the quarter for any length of time, and when you keep thinking things like, 'How am I going to make it through the evening?' or 'How was I even able to pass the time today?,' then you end up so completely out of it that you go and pay a visit to the litter-rental place, without even minding how gloomy it is. When you get there and they say, 'There's a letter here for you!'[59] and

54 An obviously poor person. [NK 115]

55 Meaning that the second string is raised two steps higher than in the standard style (*Kōjien*, 6th edition, s.v. "*niagari* 二上り").

56 Oman お万 was the name of a daughter of the Ryūkyū 琉球 House of Kagoshima 鹿児島, who committed love suicide with Gengobei. "Into the mountains of Satsuma 薩摩, Gengobei goes off somewhere, looking from a mountain high into the valley deep, Oman, poor child! bleaches the cloth, Gengobei" (*Gengobei bushi* 源五兵衛節, "Gengobei's Tune"). [NK 116]

57 *Matsuchibushi* 待乳節, a tune popular at the Yoshiwara. May be the same as the *dote* song (*dotebushi* 土手節). [NK 116] The *Kōjien* (6th edition) says of the *dote* song, "Popular tune of the Edo period. Said to have first been sung by patrons of Edo's Yoshiwara upon the embankment by the entrance, popularized from 1670 (tenth year of the Kanbun era) onward."

58 Unclear, but may be drawn from an old poem. [NK 116]

59 Litter-rental places (*koage no yado* 小揚の宿) were also called "letter halfway houses" (*fumi no nakayado* 文の中宿). Missives addressed by prostitutes to their clients were passed on there. [NK 116–17]

hand it over, you're irritated by how tough the seal is and you think to yourself, 'Gods, if only there were no glue in the world!' Out of sheer frustration, you tear open the envelope, unfold the letter, and read, 'Since yesterday I've had no end of anguish. As I lie here, prone and listless, yet bound to you, I find myself realizing how wretched this world is, how changeable its truths. "When *he* is not here!" are the words that spring up in my mind.' When you see what she has been disposed to write, you reach the deepest pit of sadness. Other times, it may be that you suspect your woman of having a heart that simply will not open, but then she says, 'Let this or that god bear witness. The extent of my feelings is so and so. Whatever the future may bring, I *will* be in your heart. If you truly have doubts about this, then pierce us both with the same blade and guide me upon the road that is darker than the dark. Accompany me to the same land in our next life.' The happiness you feel when she shows herself so steadfast is unequaled in this world.

"As to all the other things that can happen at the quarter, as circumstances dictate, they're more numerous than the grains of fine sand to be found by someone who spends eight hundred days walking along the beach, and greater in number than the seaweed plants at the bottom of a wide sea a thousand fathoms deep, so I will end my account here. Truly I am ashamed to the bone that, writing as in a postscript about the smoke that rose in my heart, burning as from oakwood, on the subject of prostitutes, my search for a follow-up to 'Kindling' has led to my producing the 'Charred Sticks' that will paint my reputation darker and darker with ashes."

The young man became very excited. "My goodness! Even just listening to stories about these things, how could a novice like me not end up taking on the same colors as the teller simply by being exposed to them too long? Oh gods, I can't take this anymore! Please, oh please, accompany me to those holy grounds, let me walk their main precincts, soon, I beg you!" he said, full of fire.

I glared at him, shaking my head the whole time I spoke. "Speaking in general, people who have caught their first glimpse of the way of love, however slight their newfound knowledge, will sink into the mire each in their own way, but from the time when they're still wet behind the ears until after they've made mistake after mistake and have finally become connoisseurs of the quarter, they can never, ever forget what they've learned. 'In any case, once dyed in that color, there is no going back to the cloth's original whiteness. Better to remain in a state of ignorance.' So it is written in *The Tale of Naniwa*,[60] and those are words to live by. Aah! Better to see a demon from hell than to look upon a prostitute! Better to walk into Tie-Dye Castle[61] than to enter the enclosure! Once you get to know it, you'll never be able to stop." At that point, with me preaching as if I were Confucius and acting as though I were the Buddha, the young man said, "Yes, yes, you are right!" and we both burst out laughing and, without noticing, nodded off. Soon, light began to shine through the clouds in the east, and the young man said, "Well, so long!" and went away.

Left alone, I turned the remaining light to the wall and sat thinking hard. What had I been saying since last night? What had I talked about? Ah, had it been a dream? Had it been reality? If I hadn't lit my 'Kindling,' I would not have burned my 'Charred Sticks' either.

- *Charred Sticks*, end

Dead Ashes

In the world of today, which in the past did not exist, there was a woman in the capital to the west. That woman became a fallen one, but at the end of her career as a working girl, beautiful of face and sweet of disposition, she put on the black robes of a nun, which took their coloring from her heart. She built a hermitage and then spent her days performing Buddhist prayers. Since I had once been a favorite of hers, one moonlit night around the beginning of the third month, when I felt like meeting her again after all this time, I approached her brushwood door on my way home from looking at flowers. She took out a pipe and sent up a haze of smoke. She put tea on to boil and sent a wave of clouds, as of the open sky, billowing up out of the foam. Despite the place, despite the kind of dwelling, it was as if I could still smell the perfume that had once been on her sleeves,[62] and that night, in that place, we talked till morning.

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60 A prostitute-rating book for Shimabara, printed in the fifth month of the first year of the Meireki 明暦 era (1655). [NK 118]

61 *Kōkechijō* 纐纈城. A place where people are hung upside down and wrung dry of all their blood, which is then used to produce tie-dyed fabrics for sale. Believed to be located in the mountains of a remote region of China. [NK 118]

62 The smell of the aloeswood the nun lit for scenting her clothes when she still lived in the licensed quarter. Lighting aloeswood

"What I don't get is, even though you still don't look like you're at that age when people get their hair snowed over, and you don't give the appearance of someone who should have frost hanging on their eyebrows by now, you've cast the world aside to live in poverty like this. Why have you done that?" I asked her.

The nun answered, "Well, as to that. When you spend enough time thinking about the workings of the world, you come to realize that even the spring flowers of the Sixth Ward[63] will eventually be dust before the evening wind, and that even the autumn moon over Shujaka Field[64] will leave no shadow on the dawntime clouds. Even that young pine twig of a servant girl,[65] begun to sprout only yesterday, will before she knows it use up the charm she will have as a courtesan, and after that, it'll hardly be a thousand years before she drops to the rank of woman overseer. When the fragrance of plum blossoms[66] inclines toward old age, then the goose who has cast off the flowers of beauty[67] will, you may be certain, set out for the northern sky.[68] Therefore, since this is the way of things, and you cannot rely on this fleeting world or put your trust in human hearts, as soon as I had left the misery of that village behind, I cut off and threw away the hair so black it had been almost blue and exchanged my scarlet sleeves for ones barely noticeable, and so became what you see. Honestly, when I think of how painful my old home was, I'm hardly able to sleep even now." She nodded with conviction.

It occurred to me that, if I chose my words skillfully, I could make her answers to me into lights for the darkness that enveloped the way of love, and so I said with unbounded joy, "Spoken indeed as someone who once knew the terrible life inside the quarter! Now I'm going to ask you some things that I'm curious about and want to understand more clearly. While it is true, by and large, that drowning in the pleasures of the flesh and ruining themselves in all sorts of ways is the habit of men, it is women who, because it's what their job entails, entertain even the worst louts without ever turning their backs on them, and therefore every one of those men, no matter if he's old or young, intelligent or foolish, will not escape falling into infatuation. So what I'd like to know is what so-called prostitutes' tricks consist of."

The nun blushed furiously. "You're asking me to tell you about things that I'm not proud of. Since this is a matter of 'I too, in the past,' it's embarrassing and difficult for me to talk about, but I'll give you a rough outline. Firstly, the big-shot owner of a house of assignation, all wealthy as he is, will sometimes meet up in secret with the prostitutes of his house. Other times, he'll get crushes on prostitutes from other houses, and, easygoing as he is, he'll often come on to them, personally sow the seeds of love in the letters he writes, and use his words to flood his chosen woman with the depth of his feelings. And then once the woman's heart softens and she, thinking it'll just be for one night, gives in to him, the number of meetings will increase, four, three, or even just two, and then after that, they might, as sometimes occurs, come to be on the lookout for breaks from prying eyes and enter into a steady relationship outside the village's knowledge. Another thing that can happen is for a well-to-do house owner, infected by proximity to the goings-on around him and fitting himself to the corresponding style as water fits in a vessel, starts aping what he sees, making the winds of love blow and using all sorts of sweet-talking tricks, but when it dawns on him that the courtesans of the two highest ranks, arrow-straight and with unyielding hearts, have no intention of giving in to his advances, then he'll lose no time in making use of the

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to perfume her hair and clothing was part of a courtesan's toilette. [NK 119]

63 The famous courtesans of Misujimachi 三筋町 in the Sixth Ward during its heyday. In the seventh year of the Keichō 慶長 era (1602), the capital's licensed quarter was moved from Yanagimachi 柳町 to the Muromachi 室町 Sixth Ward, and in the eighteenth year of the Kan'ei 寛永 era (1641), it moved to Nishishin Yashiki. *Tayū* such as Yoshino 吉野, in the employ of Hayashi Yojibei 林与次兵衛, were the famous courtesans of the Sixth Ward era. [NK 119]

64 The famous courtesans from the time after the licensed quarter moved from the Sixth Ward to Nishishin Yashiki, that is to say, to Shimabara: the *tayū* Yachiyo 八千代 of the Okumuraya 奥村屋, Kofuji 小藤 of the Nakamuraya 中村屋, Kaoru 薫 of the Kamibayashiya 上林屋, and so on. [NK 119]

65 A *kaburo* (or *kamuro* 禿) [a young servant girl to a courtesan] who is to become a *tayū* one day is here metaphorically compared to a pine. Usually, these girls would become servants at the age of seven or eight, and outstandingly beautiful ones would make their debuts as *tayū* when they were fifteen or sixteen years old. However, their glory days would only last until they were twenty-four or -five, after which they would either have their contracts bought out and retire, or descend to the ranks of *tenjin* or *kakoi*. There were also those who, in the end, became female overseers. *Tayū* were also called "pine trees." [NK 119]

66 *Tenjin*, those courtesans one rank lower than *tayū*, were also called "plums." [NK 119]

67 A woman who has lost her looks. [NK 119]

68 Be demoted to the rank of *hashijorō* 端女郎. "Northward": alternate name for the "edge apartments" (*hashikyoku* 端局), situated on the north side of Shimabara's Chūdōjichō 中堂寺町. Also called the Pigeon Hutch (*hatobeya* 鳩部屋). These *hashijorō* were the lowest-ranking prostitutes. [NK 119]

house where the woman he wants is employed, fixing seemingly real appointments for 'service to a man from the countryside' or 'a new customer, name so-and-so, place of origin this-and-that.' Suspecting nothing unusual, the woman thinks, 'Of course,' and goes out to the house of assignation on the appointed day. All that day, not a peep from the supposed customer, and when it gets dark, even though she's not waiting for him anymore, she'll say, 'Oh, what is the meaning of this?,' naturally concerned about the situation. Then the house owner, to comfort her, tells her quietly, 'Now, now, I heard your client for today has been inconvenienced, but maybe he'll still be here tonight?' But soon the gates close, early evening has passed, and the ten-o'clock limit is reached,[69] and then he says, 'Well, it looks like your client isn't coming anymore. You should go and get some rest now.' Then when she's gone up to her room and gotten into bed, here comes the man himself, sneaking in, complaining about how he's just *known*, ever since his heartache began, that she's not going to reciprocate his feelings with any degree of liveliness and lamenting about how hard it is to be lost in the river of passion. Meanwhile the prostitute, who feels nothing for him, screams in indignation and almost certainly begins to cry, but because she is a woman who knows how these things go, she does not object too forcefully, saying only, 'How could this be possible tonight? Even the woman overseer didn't know about it.' Her heart relenting a little, she undoes her undersash, not very tightly knotted to begin with. From that first time onward, as the number of meetings increases and she gradually warms up to him, it may happen that her—in other people's eyes—downright scandalous behavior gets out, but the misdeed, being what it is, is sure to be pardoned in the end. If you wonder why, it's because he pays the set price when he comes. Having to provide free service for a man who finds no opportunity to stay for any length of time, and who, after having left, is still on the lookout for any moment during the day when a prostitute has no clients coming, would that not be a hateful thing?

"You can be sure that there are also tricks that are used when a prostitute meets with someone despite having no love for him. The reason for this is that a prostitute who gets few customers and is therefore oppressed by her debts to the quarter will be happy, regardless of station, with anyone who comes to buy her services. It can happen in some cases that she, pretending that she is what you might call delightedly in love with him, will relentlessly pursue a man with requests to pay her feast-day expenses for her. Using such tricks on a gentleman connoisseur shows even more what a hateful character she has than when she traps an ordinary man in this way. 'A gentleman ruins himself,' it is said. This means that a lover, knowing perfectly well what the ways of the quarter are like, will never try to escape having to pay those expenses and will end up whittling his fortune away.

"Then there are some prostitutes who will make a fool out of a big spender and secretly take up with someone from his entourage, an entertainer, say, or someone who looks to be a stage actor. This is the kind of subhuman behavior for which *no* suitable punishment exists. Another thing that's possible is for a prostitute to come to have a lover on the side when her client, in the middle of the action, suddenly develops a liking for her, gives her all sorts of sweet talk and switches houses of assignation and things like that. This may definitely be a case of strange tastes, but eventually, her official intimate client will get wind of the matter. If things come to a head, she'll get into a fight with that former lover of hers and they'll break up. After that, she'll consent to meeting with the new man and, in effect, do so. She may not care for the new man all that much, but at this stage, is that a redeeming point at all? Another thing that can happen is for a man who has been frequenting one prostitute for years to all of a sudden fall in love with another. When that happens, then be it a stub of affection so small it doesn't even bring a blush to his face or be it a thousand branches of the spindle tree, she will, out of a heart where the mountain cherry has withered, turn to complaining about all of these in so many letters that they form a small bundle, scattering endless series of words on the subject out before everybody, lament about the matter over and over again and watch the situation play out, and not even care about the decline of her reputation. All she'll do is lean her chin on her hand and lie day-dreaming. Thus, even if he thinks of her in after days, he cannot meet her. Their hearts go out to each other, yet when the smoldering fire in those hearts is stirred up, they look elsewhere, and so sadly waste their days. Situations like this occur so often and in so many ways that to describe them all would make words lose their luster and wear the longest hairs of the brush away."

69 At ten o'clock, curfew law dictated the gate must be closed. In reality, however, this was extended to midnight. [NK 121]

I asked another question. "Now that I've heard a rough description of some of the tricks you use, it seems to me that you are able to look down on Kumasaka and treat Ishikawa as a joke,[70] with those wiles of yours springing from true thieves' hearts. My blood freezes just listening to you, and all my courage melts away. Still, it cannot be the case that a prostitute's mind is unknowable just because it's invisible. Take, for example, the case where a man breaks up with a woman he's been seeing for many years and whom he's made into his partner of choice. When he finds himself another lover after that, he'll appear to be deeply in love and on top of the world right from the start, and so people will think, 'Somebody who's lived as long as he has is bound beyond the shadow of a doubt to understand the dips and risings of the paths on the mountain of love and know the shores and beaches of the sea of affection!' But the thing about that is that there never is an end to his fickle behavior. When the changeable waves of the deeps and shallows have crashed somewhere else and then retreated,[71] it may be that he, longing for a connection to good times past, starts seeing a prostitute who used to be her servant girl, because he thinks that dating his old flame's sister prostitute will maybe, hopefully, make his melancholy feelings disappear. As he becomes her steady client, yesterday comes to feel like a dream, and his current happiness grows too great for his narrow sleeves to contain, made as they are of the thin fabric of today. 'What were the joys of the past?' he thinks, and even regrets that he can never again be what he once was. Compared to the profundity of feeling that he experiences now, his past relationship is like Mt. Fuji turned to a poppy-stem doll.[72] Cases like this happen all the time, so when a prostitute of one of the three top ranks finds a partner who suits her, there will be no end to the number of letters sent back and forth, and she'll be able to unload the burden of feast-day expenses on him for a long time, but sooner or later, the man who frequents her *will* end up losing all the money he had. It's difficult to determine, when that happens, what a prostitute's conduct and feelings in connection to the matter really are. Why is this?"

The nun laughed aloud. "My goodness, if that isn't a saucy question! The reason for that lies in the man's mind and has nothing to do with any difference in the prostitute. In other words, it is not the case that the prostitute he meets first has no skill while the one he meets later does. Because a man's heart, from the time he first starts frequenting the quarter, now becomes intimate with that one, then falls to frequenting this one, he'll get better at telling lies, and his conversational skills will also improve day by day. The result of all this is that, compared to how he was with the first prostitute he met with, his way of talking to the next one, whom he meets soon after, his way of wooing her, will be immeasurably more tasteful and refined. Now, when a man talks sweet to her, a prostitute will treat him as his position on the scale of quarter expertise dictates. If he comes across as a connoisseur, the woman will, to give just one possibility, use the truthfulness technique, saying things that must never be spoken elsewhere and neglecting to mention matters that she really should. Once she's gotten the man sufficiently captivated, the two of them will use up their entire respective bags of tricks on each other. When the man, though pretending to accept the woman's words as truth even though he knows they're falsehoods, begins to look peeved, the woman, aware of this, before long takes the few words he speaks as a pledge and, while he's talking to her as if he can barely get the words out, she, though she hates it, will write a contract and exhaust her supply of fingernails and fingers. Then the two of them will up and bare their very souls to one another, and the lies from before will turn into supreme truths. When they've seeped into each other's bones in this way, the way things are between them has nothing to do with the prostitute he used to meet having inferior techniques or with the new prostitute being better than the first one was. The man's level of libertinism has gone up, nothing more and nothing less.

"And this is the reason why it's so difficult, for a man, to make sense of a prostitute's affections and conduct. Perhaps even the Master of the Three Realms, Shakyamuni the Great Roarer himself, or even the Great Minister Confucius, Sage of the Five Ways, would not be able to understand them. Still, if you've made up your mind to go have a look at the quarter without completely losing yourself in pleasure, it's highly unlikely that you won't see a sample of what a prostitute is truly

70 That is to say, even famous robbers like Kumasaka Chōhan 熊坂長範 and Ishikawa Gouemon 石川五右衛門 could not outdo a prostitute. This rather appears to be a case of mockery on the part of the narrator. [NK 122]

71 When a man, on a whim, falls to frequenting another prostitute and then breaks off relations with her. [NK 122]

72 *Keshiningyō* 芥子人形. Tiny dressed dolls. Used for the Doll Festival or as toys. Also called "bean dolls" (*mameningyō* 豆人形). *Kōjien*, 6th edition.

like on the inside. A man can be so rich he makes Suetsugu Heizō[73] look like small fry, but even a fortune like that has a limit. In the end, when he's become poorer than dirt, the way these things go, she's not likely to just up and send money to this lover of hers. Instead of that, wanting to meet and see your lover is the common style in love, and phrases like 'thinking tenderly of' and 'missing dearly' are the spoken stock-in-trade. So, even on feast days when she has no clients to go to, she pushes the misery of this aside and thinks back on the man she loves, hoping that future days will be kind to him, and this may be said to be the first principle of love. Even more strongly, when he drops in briefly to have a look at the quarter's wares, and never mind that she happens to be with another man, she'll go out to meet him without deliberating for a second. And when it's a day off for her and she's at her lodgings, she'll come out to him and they'll pass hours in each other's company. And even though it's hard for her to go back with the situation so pleasant, such is her resolve not to make her man suffer by not seeing him that it leads her to steel herself and bear the consequences, as well as her master's harsh words. Should this not be called deep love?

"It can also sometimes happen that, not caring about the women overseers' obstructiveness and eluding people's watchful eyes, a prostitute will meet with a downcast individual at the teahouse by the gate. Or else she will, in a low-ranking prostitute's single room, spread out the rush mat for bedding, not caring about the grime painting the wooden pillow and unable, when she lies down by his side, to even fully stretch her legs in such a cramped place. Is it not the height of pathos that, in exchange for the joy of their meeting, their relationship must remain a secret to all? Other than these signs of her affection, even were she to go so far as to cut off hair, fingers, and nails, all three, and never change the color of her tattoo,[74] she would dress it up with lies should feast days even be mentioned, because she has no intention of causing suffering to her man, yet he'll still call her over, yes, and trick her over even on days like those, and *make* her take the money. But if she's determined to make him pay for her services to him, it cannot be called love."

Then I asked, "So she can't let the man she loves pay for her services even once?"

She answered, "No, that's not it. A prostitute with a lover of the kind I just described is generally no longer at the height of her glory. The reason for that is that she, being focused on that one man, has allowed the rest of her business to peter out, and as the ultimate consequence of this, good intimate clients will become a rarity for her indeed. Under these circumstances, though she won't be given, for appearance's sake, to talk about feast days, it's highly likely that there are things every now and then, like this one, that weigh more heavily on her than does cutting into herself. At such times, she'll candidly say to him, 'Under conditions like these, it won't do if I can't go out today.' As a man, he cannot back down in such a situation: he must take the expenses upon himself no matter what. Since it's so that she'll lay this burden even on the man she loves, how do you think she's likely to act with a man she does not love? If no man is willing to take the expenses of a feast day upon himself, never mind how oppressively heavy they are, she'll just sit there kneeling in a corner behind the lattice, passing the endless days in sadness. It would be foolish of her, given her pitiful state, to ask whether she would be able to make anyone purchase her services.

"Sometimes a man, in the course of conversation, will say to a woman, 'If you love me, give me a token.' When the woman answers, 'Please, wait a while for it, whatever it may turn out to be,' he'll say, 'Oh no, I am not waiting till later. In exchange for the token I'm going to get, I'll fix an appointment with you on a feast day. Be at your lodging and give me the proof I want.' Isn't it hilarious that he'd say such a thing? Truly, a clever act worthy of a connoisseur!"

I asked, "Speaking in general, do prostitutes know what love is, or don't they? Or is it perhaps that when a man's inclination is deep, so is hers, and that it is shallow when his is shallow? Does she follow him in this, in

73 Suetsugu Heizō 末次平蔵 was a Nagasaki official. In the fourth month of the fourth year of the Enpō era (1676), on a charge of smuggling, he was banished to Oki 隠岐 and his belongings confiscated. These were valued at over 8,700 *kanme* 貫目 in cash; 3,000 *ryō* in small gold coins, divided over thirty chests; ten pieces of yellow gold, placed inside ten boxes; over 10,000 *kanme* worth of loans, in silver; and, in addition, all his household effects were worth over 600,000 *ryō*. [NK 124] One *kanme* was equal to approximately 1,000 *mon* 文. Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, p. xiii, notes that one *ryō* was equal to between 3,700 and 6,000 *mon*, fluctuating daily.

74 Retain her feelings to the end. Tattooing was one way for a prostitute to display her feelings. [NK 124–25]

the same way that water runs downhill and fire catches on charred sticks?"

The nun smiled. "The answer to that is so obvious it barely needs stating. A prostitute being what she is, she's not going to have the mindset of an old beggar woman singing songs door to door. Even while she's swearing oaths of eternal, undying love, she bitterly wonders whether she's finally found a ford she can cross.[75] Likewise, just because she'll let herself get led around by the hand by somebody who beckons her while going, 'Here, kitty, kitty,' you shouldn't think it means she doesn't know what love is. Her adjusting her behavior according to the man's desires is simply the way she handles meetings when she puts love aside and her job first. If I absolutely must say it, when a prostitute dislikes a man and her dislike shows through somehow, he will soon criticize the quality of her behavior and their relationship will in many cases deteriorate, but this is something that happens only when a man hasn't gone completely stupid from womanizing. Even when such deterioration occurs, however, he will not offer reproaches to that prostitute, but end things with her in a way that is truly decent. Even afterward, concerning that prostitute's qualities, he will not say to people, 'she was like this' or 'she was like that,' but all of this should only be chalked up to his level of breeding as a man, not to any innate qualities, given that the woman he meets with now too is sure to have only shallow feelings for him before long.

"As to all the topics that no amount of talking could exhaust, I will leave many words unsaid and follow in the footsteps of the author of *The Dog's Pillow*,[76] touching on different themes as they occur to me. If you put the spoken and the unspoken together, they will reveal many things for you to see.

Joyful Things

◦ Exchanging words with a woman for whom you have an inclination but with whom, according to the rules of the quarter, you should not speak. You let her know a little bit of how you feel about her, and even though you have doubts as to the sincerity of her response, the conversation is still far from unpleasant.

◦ When you've been sightseeing in the quarter and have decided to go home early without having had an encounter, you spot a prostitute with a face that says she's been made a fool of today, coming out to meet a no-show client, and who is now looking to take a break, chin on hand. You have word sent to her that another man has come in her client's place and that she's to come to you. This is the kind of joy that appeals to a stingy man's heart.

◦ Coming to your client full of enthusiasm right from the start, without knowing why.

◦ Or dumping him hard and thereby knocking him flat, never mind that he loses his temper and says you have no cause for doing such a thing.

◦ Breaking wind in front of an overly clingy woman.

◦ Seeing the morning-after letter.

◦ Letting a woman exercise her charms on you even though you know she's not being sincere.

◦ Or better yet, having a prostitute meet you on the sly.

Sad Things

◦ Those clothes at dawn.[77]

◦ The bells on the mountain peak resounding elsewhere, now that the woman you love has been suddenly bought off by another man.

◦ Having the letter you sent in secret stolen and your reputation besmirched.

◦ Standing up the prostitute you booked to go see another, and having people catch you in the meeting with the woman you're crazy about.

◦ Having a get-together fall to pieces, but, well, that goes without saying.

◦ Being without money on an accounting day is an absolute low point of sadness, but being ringed around with obligations, be it on a feast day or on the day of the new year, and receiving one bill after another, that is sadder still.

◦ When she reveals, during your pillow talk, that she is of humble origin, and you get to hear the story

75 That is, whether she has found someone willing to marry her.

76 A piece of writing consisting of "lists of things," in imitation of the *Makura no sōshi* 枕草紙 (*The Pillow Book*). Because it is similar, yet different, it has the word "dog" as a prefix. [NK 126] Original title: *Inumakura* 犬枕. One full annotated translation of this work may be found in Edward Putzar's 1968 article "Inu Makura: The Dog Pillow."

77 The parting on the morning after a meeting. [NK 126]

of her life as a poor man's child, the tears will end up drowning you.

Long Things

◦ While it's normal for a five-foot-eight-incher to take a one-foot-eight-incher along, things get really lengthy when you take along a newly inducted prostitute on top of that.[78]

◦ A letter which you aim to write with a particular flavor.

◦ A two-man pillow.

◦ The second round with a debauched man. The streak of lecherousness in any man who buys prostitutes' services.

Short Things

◦ The pubic hair on a prostitute.

◦ A weak man's state of agitation. Saying thank you to someone at the gate is very annoying.

◦ Summer nights, as everyone knows. It's said in poetry that autumn nights are long, but no sooner have you finally been able to get into your bed and lie down, than dawn will already be showing in the eastern clouds.

◦ The bill from the house of assignation, due on the fifteenth. It *ought* to be short, thanks to your clients.

Deep Things

◦ A relationship gotten into by using tricks.

◦ And speaking of the depth of relationships out of tricks, I remember a case where the man was the owner of a house of assignation,[79] I forget his name. I think I heard something, vaguely, about the prostitute's being someone who made her living by rowing a one-man boat around in Naniwa Bay, on waves that never brought her to harbor. Once the two of them had gotten close, they would, I don't know how many times a day, send an endless stream of letters back and forth as gifts to each other, but as far as can be ascertained today,[80] there may as well never have been a single one, not from the woman and not from the man. Their way of handling things truly shows great expertise, and the way they planned for every possible contingency is fit to stir up cries of admiration. The work of Kashiwagi no Emon's brush, which he himself had hinted at, was discovered by Hikaru Genji under Princess Nyosan's cushion rug, as a consequence of her naivete.[81] The man I'm talking about now must have been aware of the way things played out then, and so knew to avoid the same mistake. And the woman, too, because she loved her man so much, never breathed a word to anyone for the longest time. The color of the ink in her tattoo stood guard over her purity, and the cutting of her hair fixed her faithfulness forever. This affair can be quoted as a shining example of what it means for something to be deep.

◦ From the moment you're caught in it, one pitfall on this way of love that, try as you may, you cannot climb out of, is the licensed quarter.

Shallow Things

◦ A prostitute who sells her services for no other reason than because it's her job.

◦ Be it in a letter or during conversation, scattering solemn vows around everywhere in writing or in spoken words. A woman who does this may think she's just trying to sell her merchandise, but it makes her feelings look shallow. There are believed to have been examples of this at any point in time you care to name, and they are deeply shallow indeed.

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78 When a *tayū* goes out accompanied by a *kakoi*. This was called "tugboating" (*hikifune* 引船). A *tayū*'s fee was fifty-eight *monme*, that of a *kakoi* was eighteen, hence why they were called so. [NK 127]

79 The man was Shichizaemon 七左衛門 of the Maruya 丸屋, a Shimabara house of assignation. The woman was the *tenjin* Ofune 御船, in the employ of Miyajima Kanzaburō 宮島甚三郎, of Shimabara's Tayūmachi 太夫町. After the events described here, she changed quarters to Ōsaka's Shinmachi 新町 and became a *tayū*. [NK 127]

80 The details of the case are unclear, but it may be that, even though the pair had planned a love suicide, only Shichizaemon ended up dying. [NK 127]

81 Intendant Kashiwagi no Emon 柏木の衛門 sent a letter to Hikaru Genji's 光源氏 wife Princess Nyosan 女三の宮 and was able to hide in the princess's bedroom, guided there by a lady-in-waiting. The morning-after letter ends up in Genji's hands. When the princess becomes pregnant, Kashiwagi, pained by the sin he has committed vis-à-vis Genji, dies of illness. (*The Tale of Genji*, Wakana, Part Two, and Kashiwagi) [NK 128]

◦ The heart of a woman who asks for favors even from a man who is not her intimate friend. And yet, mind you, such behavior is very unlikely to be called out as shallow, and this is due to keen insight on her part.

◦ In general, the heart of a man who spends money at random.

Pitiful Things

◦ A little servant girl's wanting to sleep after she's been worked too hard.

◦ The time, unexpected, when you find out about a lover's crafty behavior toward you when you're already harboring doubts about the reality of their affections.

◦ Listening in on a prostitute as she notes down all her expenses on a slip of thick paper and talks to herself about the troubles she suffers under, because she cannot speak of them to her man, no matter how heavily the cost of having to pay her own fees weighs on her. It's not just pitiful; you feel the pathos and the misery of it too.

◦ When a big man booms that he's decided to buy a newly minted little prostitute's first time. It's pitiful for her even before he gets in the bed.

◦ Times when a woman is forced not to care about chancre or gonorrhea.

◦ When a client forces a prostitute to perform oral sex on him. It is so excessively horrible that I cannot even put it into words.

◦ When a client makes you do the deed with the application of lubricant. When he makes you do it after having inserted things like dried sea cucumbers or kumquats into the anus or, in the same way, between the balls. This is the kind of thing that you have no choice but to make a part of your array of techniques.

Hateful Things

◦ Spending a long time together with a man who is a raging know-it-all. A man with an endless capacity for mindless yakking.

◦ A client who, on the day he's made an appointment with you, goes away late, comes back drunk on wine he got at another house, and then still thinks he's been a stellar lover, is hateful in the extreme.

◦ A man of whom you hear that he has used wiles on the woman he meets. This is hateful even if you only hear about it after the fact.

◦ A woman who opens a man's purse while he sleeps. It's not likely that there are such thieves among prostitutes, but if there are, they are certainly hateful.

◦ A letter sent by a prostitute in which she talks about feast days without appearing to be someone who has any affection for the man who is going to receive the letter. The sudden abundance of loving words is painful to behold, and even though amusing, it is also hateful.

◦ When a man uses tricks in order to meet with the woman he loves no matter what but a woman overseer gets in the way, the degree to which he wants to get rid of her even if it means cutting her down.

◦ When you think about it, the heart of any prostitute is hateful.

◦ For a woman to pretend to be having an orgasm when she really isn't, for her to breathe roughly through her nose and even go so far as to toss and twist around, that is hateful, all the more so if she starts crying fake tears into the bargain.

Fun Things

◦ Dancing, obviously.[82]

◦ *Nagibushi*,[83] whenever you hear it.

◦ Watching off to the side when you've made a weak man and a stupid prostitute fight.

◦ The way an aging woman acts all lovey-dovey when she's lying in bed with a man who's only just begun frequenting her. When you hear snatches of her love talk, you'll be fit to die laughing.

◦ The inside of a mutually loving couple's bedroom.

◦ Anytime you're able to peel away a woman's lies layer by layer through the art of sneakily worming the truth out of her. This may be a mean thing to do, but it's fun to watch her pile lie upon lie and try to string a believable set of words together.

◦ In general, from the moment you enter the Great Gate to the quarter, there is not a single thing that isn't fun.

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82 The *bon'odori* 盆踊 dance. It was danced on a stage in the licensed quarters, upon which actors and attendants to wealthy customers could also join in, with famous balladeers singing to direct the dance. [NK 129]

83 Alternative name of *nagebushi* 投節, a famous product of the Shimabara. The name *nagibushi* 梛節 refers to the song itself, *nagebushi* to the way it is sung. [NK 129]

Melancholy Things

◦ The scene containing the dialogue with Kodayū in Arashi San'uemon's[84] play on prostitutes' wiles.

◦ There are all kinds of things that simply overflow with melancholy, but because these looked old-fashioned already in *The Dog's Pillow*, I'll leave off talking about them here.

Sensible Things

◦ Someone who never goes to the quarter even once. Nothing could possibly be more sensible than this.

◦ Even though it should be the case that a prostitute has no sense while her client does, the prostitute will gain sense provided nothing bad happens to her. The man who sees his money spent is not sensible for this very reason.

Foolish Things

◦ Since I'm ashamed of myself when it comes to these, I won't talk about them.

Lively Things

◦ The door to the Ōsakaya.[85]

◦ Talking about the feast days is old hat at this point. Shichizaemon's and Kiuemon's shops,[86] anytime you look at them. In general, when something is expensive, it'll be lively.[87]

◦ Gansai's jokes.[88] Recently, he's started making use of an actor for them or somesuch, so of course those jokes are lively.

Lonely Things

◦ In poetry, autumn nights are described like this, but in that village, on the two season-ending days and just before feast days, there is no trace of color left. The mountains covered in black pines are visible, and it's so melancholy and lonely that you don't even need a heart in order to feel as if the flow of water, in the swamps where the snipes stand, has dried up at last. Truly, it is so miserable that only the phrase 'Flowers and red leaves are all gone' is sufficient to describe it.

With this judgment on loneliness, the reminiscences that have occupied our shared evening and dawn at the hermitage have been exchanged for the sound of the bell, which breaks up the dream and always leaves us the day like this." As she spoke, the shelf-like clouds grew still longer in their whiteness and we were startled by the voices of a flock of crows. I discarded the memory of the night and headed home. Seeking the traces of the smoke from "kindling" and the grime from

84 The famous Arashi San'uemon 嵐三右衛門, first of his line, founder of the *roppō* 六方 style. In the winter of the third year of the Enpō era (1675), he became the proprietor of the Miyakomandayū 都万太夫 Theater, on the south side of Kyoto's Fourth Ward. Kodayū was the theater's young-woman actor Itō Kodayū 伊藤子太夫. As for the "play on prostitutes' wiles," San'uemon's *kyōgen* 狂言 play "A Prostitute's Contract Bought Out," a *kyōgen* on the topic of prostitute buying, staged in the spring of the eighth year of the Enpō era (1680) and starring San'uemon as Genpei 源兵衛 of the Oguraya 小倉屋 and Kodayū as the *tayū* Yoshino, was a famous one, but it is not clear what the title and the year of staging were of the play referred to here. [NK 130] *Roppō*, in kabuki, is a swaggering performance style whereby an actor would move along the walkway to the stage while swinging his hands around and lifting his feet up high (*Kōjien*, 6th edition). *Kyōgen* is a kind of spoken drama that refines the comedic elements of *sarugaku* 猿楽, an older type of play, built around humorous impersonations and verbal art.

85 Tarōbei 太郎兵衛 of the Ōsakaya 大阪屋, a brothel on Shimabara's Shimo-no-chō 下之町. It was very successful, with an endless stream of customers making merry at its lattice. [NK 130]

86 These are probably the brothels run by Shichizaemon 七左衛門 of the Hishiya 菱屋 (east side of Chūdōjichō, Shimabara) and by Kizaemon 喜左衛門 of the Hachimonjiya 八文字屋 (west side of same). Both of these only had *hashijorō* in their employ, but when hard times set in, they may have prospered all the more. [NK 130–31]

87 It appears the nun is here generalizing from the case of the two brothels she mentions, to say that their very expensiveness makes them attractive because it signifies high quality of "wares."

88 Gansai no Yashichi 願西の弥七, one of the "Four Heavenly Kings" (*shitennō* 四天王) of the capital's *massha* 末社 [also called *taikomochi* 太鼓持, men who made a living by acting as professional companions to keep the wealthy amused on their pleasure trips (Segawa-Seigle, *Yoshiwara*, pp.117–19)]. Together with the actor Kinai, he was a skilled hand at ballads and would sing to lead the *bon'odori* at the licensed quarter. [NK 131]

"charred sticks," before I could forget the words I'd said and heard I wrote them down, an insignificant trifle, in "dead ashes" drawn from the smoke and the grime. This is the recording of a lifetime's worth of folly, and my final play. If those who see it think of it as a memento of me once I have gone to hiding in the grass, may they not despise me for it.

- *Dead Ashes*, end

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NKBZ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集. 51 vols. Shōgakukan, 1970–1976.

NST *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想体系. 67 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.

SNKT *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学体系. 106 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1989–2005.

SNKZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Shōgakukan, 1994–2001.

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