The objects of Ikkyū's critical verses are mostly other monks and decadent trends within the Rinzai Sect. He criticizes his fellow monks for their narrow concerns, petty quarrels, and especially their propagation of the "name" of Zen - its power and influence in secular affairs - and the "profit" of Zen. Despair over the spiritual degeneration of the Rinzai sect was a lifetime preoccupation for Ikkyū. In opposition to this corruption, Ikkyū defiantly asserts himself as the only champion of true Zen. Eccentricity is the trademark of his Zen. He calls himself crazy, but his self-confidence is overwhelming.
自粛

風狂狂客起狂風
来往嬉坊酒肆中
具眼衲僧誰一揆
画南画北画西東

jisan

ふくよ きょきゃく きょうふ お お こす
らいそ いんぼ しゅし お うち
ぐがん きょ そ たれ か い さつ
みなみ お かくし, きた お かくし, にし,
ひがし お かくす.
Self-praise

Crazy madman stirring up a crazy style,
Coming and going amid brothels and wineshops.
Which of you patch-cloth monks can trip me up?
I delineate the South, I delineate the North, I
delineate the West and East.

Trip me up: When meeting, Zen monks always tried to measure the enlightenment of one another by posing oblique questions or making a challenging gesture of some kind. Hesitation over what to say or do next in these encounters equaled defeat. It is this to which Ikkyū is referring.
蛙

慣釣鯨鯨咲一場
泥沙礫歩太忙忙
可憐井底稱尊大
天下衲僧皆子弟

a

keigei o tsuru ni narete warai ichijō
deisha ni ho o kishirite hanahada bōbō
awaremubeshi seitei ni sondai to shōsu
tenka no nōsō mina shiyō
Frogs

Accustomed to fishing for whales, I had to laugh
At the frogs, thrashing through the mud so busi-
ly.

They are pitiable, those at the bottom of wells,
calling themselves great;
All the patch-cloth monks under heaven are just
like Tzu-yang.

Frogs: The frog at the bottom of the well is well-known in
China and Japan as a metaphor for narrow-minded people who con-
sider themselves important simply because they are blind to the
rest of the world.

Tzu-yang: Duke Sun-shu 公孫述 of the Han Dynasty. He became
the king of Szechwan and called himself "Son of Heaven." He squan-
dered money by building palaces so his reign was cut short by as-
sassination. Ma-yüan 馬援 in the History of the Later Han Dynasty
says of him, "Tzu-yang was just a frog at the bottom of the well."

Ikkyú always kept his mind on the great truth, here likened to
a whale, while all the other monks occupied themselves with the
superficial aspects of the doctrine, busy like frogs thrashing
through the mud. One is reminded of the Toba Sōjō 鳥羽僧正
animal scroll, which parodies monks by painting them in the forms
of frogs, rabbits, and monkeys.
尺八

一枝尺八恨難任
吹入胡笳塞上吟
十字街頭誰氏曲
少林門下絶知音

shakuhachi

isshi no shakuhan chi urami tae gatashi
fuite koka saijō no gin ni iru
jōjigaitō ta-ga uji no kyoku zo
shōrin monka chiin mare nari
Shakuhachi

Music from the shakuhachi, sorrow difficult to bear,
Blowing into the barbarian flute, a song at the frontier;
At the crossroads, whose piece does he play?
Among the students of Zen, I have few friends.

Shakuhachi: A bamboo flute with a very shrill sound. Wandering mendicant monks called komuso played the shakuhachi as they went about begging.

Barbarian flute: A flute made of a reed with no holes for fingering. It was used among the barbarians on the borders of China and was renowned for its sad sound.

This is a description of Ikkyu's loneliness. He hears an unfamiliar song played on a shakuhachi at the crossroads and imagines that he is at some frontier post in China hearing the strange music of the barbarians. The poem as a whole is reminiscent of many T'ang poems on the subject of lonely duties at frontier outposts. Ikkyu himself was known to have played the shakuhachi in the streets.
嫌抹香

作家手段孰商量
説道談禅舌更長
純老天然惡殊勝
暗颦鼻孔仙前香

makkō o kirau
satsuke no shudan tare ka shōryō
do o toki zen o danjite shita sara ni nagashi
junrō tennen shushō o nikumu
an ni biku o shikamu butsuzen no kō
I Hate Incense

Who can measure a master's means?
Explaining the Way, discussing Zen, their tongues just grow longer.
I have always disliked piety.
In the darkness, my nose wrinkles, incense before the Buddha.
Ikkyū's prose introduction to poems about a disturbance at Daitokuji.

"In the autumn of the year 1447, there was a monk at the Daitoku temple who for no reason committed suicide. Scandal-loving monks made slanderous reports to the officials. So, in connection with this calamity five or seven of my fellow monks were imprisoned. This was sufficient to cause great trouble within my school. At that time, people were noisily spreading rumors about it. I listened to them and then, the last day of the month, disappeared into the mountains. The reason for my leaving was that I simply could not bear it. It chanced that a scholar came by here, himself just from Kyoto. He informed me of the various things going on at the temple which are all the more unendurable and lamentable. As this happened to occur on the ninth day of the ninth month, I have made nine poems."

This prose introduction and the following two poems which I have selected out of Ikkyū's nine record the incident over which Ikkyū is supposed to have resolved to starve himself to death. As can be seen, Ikkyū himself makes no direct reference to the idea of suicide. It is obvious, however, from these poems that it was a deeply depressing situation for him. The poems graphically express his feeling of helplessness before such manifestations of evil within the temple. In the first poem, he uses the image of a devil a hundred feet tall to express the magnitude of the evil he sees. In the second poem, a storm in nature symbolizes the political storm at Daitokuji.

Ryōzen: An abbreviation for Ryōjusen "Holy Eagle Mountain" which is a translation of the Sanskrit name for the mountain Grdhra-kūta. This mountain is located in modern Bihar. It gets its name from its resemblance to an eagle. Shakyamuni is said to have preached there
and hence its connection with the "true doctrine."²

The King of Demons: Something like the devil in Christianity, but since Buddhism is essentially a non-dualistic philosophy, that is, one which emphasizes a transcendent truth encompassing both good and evil, the King of Demons is not in absolute opposition to good as is the Christian devil. He is described as "the kind of devil who is the lord of the six heavens in the world of desire. Together with his followers, he hinders people from adhering to the Buddhist religion."³

Cloudy sake: Unrefined sake, of poor quality and perhaps even homemade.
斬我声名猶未韜
参禅学道長勧勞
靈山正法掃地滅
不意魔王十丈高

風外松杉乱入雲
諸方動衆又驚群
人境機間吾不會
濁醜一盡醉醺醺

hazu ware seimei nao imada tsutsu sumazu
sanzen gakudō jinrō o chōzu
ryōzen no shōbō chi o haratte metsusu
omowazariki maō no jūjō takakaran to wa

fūgai no shōsan midarete kumo ni iru
shōhō wa shū o ugokashi mata gun o odorokasu
ninkyō kikan ware e sezu
dakuro issan yotte kunkun
I am ashamed my name and fame are not yet obscured;
Practicing Zen, studying the Way, dustry troubles grow:
The true doctrine of Ryōzen is swept from the earth and destroyed:
Unexpectedly, the King of Demons has grown a hundred feet high.

The wind outside, pines and cedars in confusion enter clouds.
Everywhere, the multitudes are moved, the masses astonished.
The workings of humanity I do not understand;
One cup of cloudy sake and I am drunk.
自賛
華叟子孫不知禅
狂雲面前誰說禅
三十年來肩上重
一人荷擔松原禅

jisan
kasō no jison zen o shirazu
kyōun menzen tare ka zen o toku
sanjū nenrai kenjō omoshi
innin katasu shōgen no zen
Self-praise

Kasō's descendant does not know Zen.
In front of Crazy-Cloud, who would explain Zen?
For thirty years, heavy on my shoulders
I have carried the burden of Sung-yüan's Zen.

Kasō: Ikkyū's master.

Sung-yüan: One of the important transmitters of the line of Rinzai teaching that Ikkyū, by way of Kasō, was heir to. The descendant of Kasō who does not know Zen and does not shoulder his share of the burden of transmitting the teaching can be none other than Yōsō.
示会裏徒三首
樂中有苦一休門
箇箇蛛争井底尊
昼夜在心元字脚
是非人我一生喧

eri no to ni shimesu san shu
rakuchū ku ari ikkyū no mon
koko a arasou seiteitō no son
chūya kokoro ni oku genjikyaku
zehi ninja isshō kamabisushi
Three Poems to Show at a Meeting of Monks

In the midst of happiness there is trouble in Ikkyū's school.
Each frog fighting for respect at the bottom of the well;
Day and night busy thinking about the details of the scriptures;
Right and wrong, self and other, fussing away a whole life.
公案参来 明廻廻
胸襟勘破 暗昏昏
怨憎到 死難忘却
道伴 忠言 逆耳根

kōan sanji kitatte mei rekireki
kyōkin kanpa sureba an konkon
onzō shī shī ni itaru made bōkyakushi gatashi
dōban no chūgen ji kon ni sakarau
Involved in the koan, it comes distinct and clear.

Breaking into the heart, blackness is dark, dark.

There are resentments that until death are difficult to forget.

The sincere reproofs of fellow monks grate on the ears.
徒学得祖師言句
識情刀山剣樹
看看頻頻挙他非
銜血噴人其口汚

itazura ni soshi no gonku o gakutokushite
shikijō wa tōzan, ge wa kenju
miyo, miyo, himbin ta no hi o kosuru o
chi o fukunde hito ni haku sono kuchi kegaru
In vain do you learn the words and phrases of the old masters.

Knowledge is like the razor sharp tusks of Tōzan.

See them, following one upon another, bringing up the faults of others.

Whoever holds blood in his mouth to spit out at others, his mouth is polluted.

**Words and phrases of the old masters:** Most of the teachings of the T'ang and Sung Zen masters are recorded in laconic sayings and anecdotes, the key words and phrases of which serve as touchstones for a certain kind of consciousness but which is not meant to be intellectually rationalized.

**Tusks of Tōzan:** Tōzan is a mythical mountain in hell with sharp edges.

These three poems are interesting examples of the kind of lessons Ikkyū gave to his followers. All three verses are quite severe in tone. The first quatrain is simple enough; it admonishes preoccupation with the letter of the scriptures which only leads to disputes. The second poem is a description of the faulty understanding of a kōan. Intellectually it may appear clear, but deep in the heart resentments that are difficult to root out remain. The strong imagery in the third poem emphasizes the dangers of purely verbal knowledge which is turned as a sword against others. Akizuki Ryūmin thinks that these criticisms were aimed at Yōsō's handling of kōan instruction within Daitokuji. Apparently Yōsō allowed students to get by with a mere intellectual understanding of the kōan.
題養叟大用苞

山林富貴五山衰
唯有邪師無正師
欲把一竿作漁客
江湖近代逆風吹

yōsō no daiyōan ni daisu
sanrin wa fūki gozan wa otorou
tada jashi nomi arite, shōshi nashi
ikkan o totte gyokaku to naran to hossureba
kōko kindai gyaku fū fuku
Inscription for Yōsō's Hermitage

The temples are wealthy but the Five Mountains are declining;
There are only false masters, there are no true masters.
I would like to take a fishing rod and go fishing,
But these days, in the world, a contrary wind blows.

The Five Mountains: The five primary temples of the Rinzai Sect. Here they represent the sect in general.

This poem is very similar to the two poems directed against Yōsō that were cited in Chapter II. In front of Yōsō, Ikkyū always emphasizes simple things—straw sandals, bamboo walking stick, a life of plain pleasures—as compared to the life of wealth and ostentation that Yōsō pursued in the temple. Here the fishing rod and going fishing symbolize the simple life, while the contrary wind represents the tide of the times toward degeneration which Yōsō and the other monks are swept up in.
賀大用苞養叟和尚
賜宗恵大照禅師号

紫衣師号粟家貫
綾紙青銅三百緯
大用現前縁長老
看来真箇普州人

daiyōan yōsō oshō sōe daishō zenji no go o
tama o gasu
shie shigō ie no hin o ikansen
ryōshi seidō sanbyaku min
daiyū genzen gan chōrō
mi-kitareba shinko fushō no hito
Congratulating Daiyōan's Monk Yōsō Upon Receiving the Honorary Title Zen Master Soe Daishō

Purple robes, honorary titles, how can the house be poor?
The Imperial Edict alone cost three hundred strings of copper coins.
The appearance of great Zen activity, the old charlatan,
If you just look at him, you can tell he is really a man from P'ū-chou.

Honorary title: A title usually bestowed on an outstanding monk after his death. To receive one while alive was a mark of exceptional recognition.
The Imperial Edict alone cost...: Honorary titles were granted by the Imperial court. Ikkyū implies here that Yōsō bribed the court to obtain a title.
Man from P'ū-chou: In China, P'ū-chou was traditionally considered the province of thieves and robbers.
The appearance of great Zen activity: A Zen term denoting energetic service to the sect.
嘆文章

人具畜生牛馬愚
詩文元地獄工夫
我慢邪慢情識苦
可嘆波旬親得途

bunshō o azakeru

hito wa sonau chikushō gyūba no gu
shibun wa moto jigoku no kufū
gaman jaman jōshiki no ku
tanzubeshi hajun shitashiku to o uru koto o
Ridiculing Literature

Men are endowed with the stupidity of horses and cows.

Poetry was originally a work of Hell.

Self-pride, false pride, suffering from the passions;

We must sigh for those taking this path to intimacy with demons.

This condemnation of poetry was probably directed at the Gozan Bungaku 五山文学 "Five Mountain Literature" school which, for all intents and purposes, had given poetry priority over Zen. Yet Ikkyū himself was so absorbed in poetry; one can also detect a note of jocular self-reproach.