Chapter V

POEMS ABOUT LOVE

The poems about love are divided into two sections, those about brothels and those about Ikkyū's affair with Shin.

The poems about love in the brothels often contain Zen themes. One gets the impression that going to brothels was a kind of religious experience for Ikkyū which is not as contradictory a concept as it might seem at first. The nature of Zen enlightenment does not necessarily exclude sensual experiences. Zen as a branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism insists on the essential unity of nirvāṇa (enlightenment) and samsāra (the sphere of birth and death). Suzuki, in his book on Mahāyāna Buddhism, presents the formula which is at the core of Mahāyāna Buddhism, "Yas kleças so bodhi, yas samāras tat nirvānam." "What is Sin or Passion, that is Intelligence, what is birth and death, that is Nirvāna." In other words, there is no nirvāṇa to be sought outside this worldly life. Or, as this passage from the Vimalakīrti-nirdesah Sūtra expresses it:

Just as the lotus flowers do not grow in the dry land, but in the dark colored watery mire, O son of good family, it is even so (with Intelligence (prajña or bodhi)). In non-activity and eternal annihilation which are cherished by the Čravakas and Pratyekabuddhas there is no opportunity for the seeds and sprouts of Buddhahood to grow. Intelligence can grow only in the mire and dirt of passion and sin. It is by virtue of passion and sin that the seeds and sprouts of Buddhahood are able to grow.2

Suzuki himself is very eloquent in the elucidation of this subtle point:

Nirvāṇa is not to be sought in the heavens nor after a departure from this earthly life nor in the annihilation of human passions and
aspirations. On the contrary, it must be sought in the midst of worldliness, as life with all its thrills of pain and pleasure is no more than Nirvāṇa itself.\textsuperscript{3}

Inherent in this conception, characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is a more positive attitude toward the phenomenal world which contrasts strikingly with the more austere and world-disdaining tendencies of Hinayāna Buddhism.

The conception of the essential unity and voidness of the universe led to a great proliferation in the ways and means of attaining enlightenment or salvation. One of the most astounding, at least from a traditional Western religious viewpoint, was the form of Tantric Buddhism which saw the bliss of physical union as the profound experience of the non-dual nature of the universe and celebrated it as such. This is not to suggest that Ikkyū was influenced by this form of Buddhism, for he certainly was not, but to make clear that Ikkyū's fascination with the act of love was not contradictory to the basic principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism.
話頭古則長欺謨
日用折腰空對官
榮銜世上善知識
怪坊兒女着金襴

inbō no ju, motte tokuhō no chishiki o hazukashimu
watō kosoku giman o chōzu
nichiyō koshi o otte munashiku kan ni taisu
eigen sejō no zen-chishiki
inbō no jijo kinran o tsuku
Kōan, old examples, deception grows;
Everyday breaking one's back meeting the officials,
Idly boasting of the virtuous knowledge that transcends the world.
The young girl in the brothel wears golden vestments.

Golden vestments were worn by monks of very high rank on ceremonial occasions. Ikkyū conveys his belief that the brothel girl was more fit to wear the vestments of high office than the monk officials themselves.
山居二首

姓坊十載興難窮
強住空山幽谷中
好境雲遮三万里
長松逆耳屋頭風

sankyo nishu

inbō jissai kyō kiwame-gatashi
shiiite kūzan yūkoku no uchi ni jōsu
kōkyō kumo saegiru sanman ri
chō shō mimi ni sakarau okutō no kaze
Two Poems About Living in Retreat
in the Mountains

Ten years spent in brothels, elation difficult
to exhaust.

Now, forced to live amid empty mountains and
gloomy valleys,

30,000 miles of clouds spread between here and
those delightful places;

The wind in the tall pines around the house
grates upon my ears.
狂雲真是大燈孫
鬼窟黑山何稱尊
憶昔歌雲雨夕
風流年少倒金樽

kyōun wa shin ni kore daitō no son
kikutsu kokuzan nanzo son to shōsen
omou mukashi shōka un-u no yūbe
fūryū no nenshō kinson o tōseshi koto o
Crazy Cloud is truly the descendant of Daitō.
Demon caves and black mountains, what is there to revere?
I remember old songs on the panpipes, evenings of cloud-rain,
Beautiful youths, draining the golden cask.

Cloud-rain: One of Ikkyū's most frequent metaphors for lovemaking which comes from a Chinese story about the king of Ch'ū. The king, while traveling in Kao T'ang, dreamed that he met and made love to the spirit of Wushan, "Sorceress Mountain." He pleaded with her to stay with him, but she insisted on leaving saying that in the morning she became a cloud on the south side of the mountain and in the evening she became the rain. The king built a shrine for her there. Thereafter in China, phrases like the dream of Wushan, the cloud of Wushan, the rain of Wushan, and cloud-rain became metaphors for sexual intercourse.

Ikkyū was forced by unknown circumstances to go to a mountain retreat. He disliked these "gloomy valleys" and "black mountains"; they aroused in him an acute longing for the warm company of the brothels. One might think such shameless longing to be unworthy of a Zen monk, but Ikkyū not only denies this but claims to be the true inheritor of Daitō's Zen.
老婆心為 賊過梯
清浄沙門與女妻
今夜美人若約我
拓楊春老更生梯

rōbashin zoku no tame ni kakehashi o kasu
shōjō no shamon ni nyosai o atau
konya bijin moshi ware ni yakuseba
koyō haru oite sara ni hikobae o shōzen
The old woman intended to make a ladder for that rascal;
So, to the celibate monk she gave a girl as a wife.
Tonight, if a beautiful woman were to make love to me,
Spring's withered old willow would put forth new shoots.

Ladder: A metaphor for the girl that the old woman wanted to give the monk. The implication is that the girl represented a way by which the monk might rise to new realms of awareness.

Ikkyū's prose introduction: "Once upon a time there was an old woman who for twenty years had supported the head of a hermitage. She always sent a sixteen-year old girl to bring meals and serve him. One day she told the girl to embrace him and ask, 'Right at this moment, what is it like?' She did so and the monk said, 'I feel like an old withered tree leaning against cold stones during the three months of winter when there is no warm weather.' The girl returned and described what had happened. The old woman said, 'For twenty years I have been supporting a charlatan.' Then she chased him out and burned the hermitage down."

The issue here is the authenticity of the monk's purity. Ikkyū obviously concurs with the old woman that the monk was probably seething inside with erotic interest in the young girl but because of slavery to lifeless conventions, he denied his true feelings and gave the conventional response. Since clinging to anything, even the laws of conventional morality, is contrary to Zen practice, the monk was a charlatan and a scoundrel.
題 姓地
美人雲雨愛河深
樓子老禪樓上吟
我有抱持嘆吻興
竟無火聚捨身心

inbō ni daisu
bijin un-u ai no kawa fukashī
rōshi rōzen rōjō no gin
ware hōji sōfun kyō wa ari
tsui nika kajū-shashin ni kokoro nashi
Inscription for a Brothel

À beautiful woman's cloud-rain, love's deep river.

Up in the pavilion, the pavilion girl and the old monk sing.

I find inspiration in embraces and kisses;
I do not think at all of abandoning my body as though it were a heap of fire.

Heap of fire: A phrase taken from the Nirvāṇa Sūtra: "Regarding one's body as though it were a heap of fire, this is called self-righteousness." The phrase represents the orthodox pejorative view of sex in Buddhism which also holds that a man striving for spiritual development must harness all his energies toward that end. It is not that sex is evil or sinful but that the vital energy which is the essence of sex, once expended in physical union, is then lost to spiritual development. According to Conze, "meditation and sexual intercourse have in common the goal and the force that they use. For the simple reason that one cannot use the same force twice, complete suppression of sexual behavior is indispensable to success in meditation." This point of view is the most prevalent in Hinayāna Buddhism where it is part of a general disdain for experiences of the phenomenal world. The Mahāyāna doctrine, however, based on the equation of nirvāṇa and samsara which has already been discussed, has a more affirmative attitude not only toward sex but toward all phenomena. In this particular poem, Ikkyū defends sensual love not on philosophical grounds but because of the quality of the experience itself. He was exhilarated rather than exhausted and so could not see the sense of the old point of view.
大燈忌宿忌
以前対美
人
宿忌之開山謡
経咒逆耳僧
雲雨風流事終後
夢閤私語笑慈明

daitō ki shukki izen bijin ni taisu
shukki no kaizan fūgin
kyōju mimi ni sakarau shūsō no koe
un-u fūryū ji owatte ato
mujun no shigo jimyō o warau
Meeting With a Beautiful Woman the Night Before Daitō's Commemoration Ceremony

They are intoning the sutras on the eve of the commemoration;
The Sanskrit of the sutras grates on my ears, the voices of many monks.
After making love in a graceful way,
Mujun in intimate conversation laughs at Tzu-ming.

Mujun: Another name for Ikkyū. See Ichikawa, 146.

Tzu-ming: Another name for Shih-shuang Ch' u-yüan (Shisō Sōen) who is supposed to have jabbed a gimlet in his thigh to keep himself awake at night for meditation. Ikkyū laughs at him because he has found a better way to stay awake at night.
羅漢道侶坊圓
出塵羅漢遠仙地
一入坊覓大智
深咲文殊唱楞嚴
失却少年風流事

rakan inbō ni asobu nozu
shutsujin no rakan butsuji ni tōzakaru
hitotabi inbō ni itte daichi o hassu
fukaku warau monju ryōgon o tonauru o
shitsukyakusu shōnen fūryū no ji
Picture of an Arhat Reveling in a Brothel

Emerging from the dust, the arhat is still far from Buddha.
Enter a brothel once and great wisdom happens.
I laugh deeply at Manjusri reciting the Sūrayānigama Sutra,
Lost and gone are the pleasures of his youth.

Dust: A common Buddhist metaphor for the mundane world.
Manjusri: The bodhisattva most closely associated with wisdom.

In this poem Ikkyū's equation of the act of love with some kind of transcendental experience generating wisdom is made more explicit. Ignorant of such experiences, the world-disdaining arhat still has a long way to go before he attains a complete realization of the ultimate truth.
詩曰

姓風家国喪亡愁
君看睢鳩在彼洲
隨例宮娥主恩夕
王孟夜夜幾春秋

shi ni iwaku
inpu kakoku sobo no urei
kimi miyo shokyuu ka nosu ni ari
rie ni shitagatte kyuga shuon no yube
gyokuhai yaya iku shinjyu zo
The Book of Songs Says

Lascivious ways, the sorrow of losing house and country.

The lord sees the fishhawk on the other bank of the river.

Following precedent, the court lady on the evenings of her lord's favor,

A jeweled cup, night after night, how many springs and autumns?

This poem alludes to the first poem in the Book of Songs, "Kuan cries the Fish Hawk." This love song tells of a lord's infatuation with a young girl. The image of the girl haunts him night and day and he is not satisfied until he has her. Ikkyū's poem superimposes upon this original theme another one common in Chinese love stories, namely of a ruler neglecting and losing his country for the excessive love of a woman. Perhaps the best known story of this kind is the legend of the love between the emperor Hsüan-tsung and his concubine Yang Kuei-fei (supra). Ikkyū while reading the first poem of the Book of Songs was reminded of the folly of overly ardent love among people in responsible positions. Yet the predominant tone of the poem is not a moralistic one. Rather it evokes a mood of philosophical reflection on the sadness inherent in the transience of all worldly things. This fleeting quality gives excessive love its special charm.
俗人姓坊門前吟詩帰

樓子無心彼有心
詩詩客包何姓
宿雨西晴小歌暮
多情可愛倚門吟

zokujin inbō monzen nishi o eijite kaeru
rōshi mushin kare ushin
shi ni insu shikaku iro nanzo insu
shuku-u nishi ni haru shōka no kure
tajō aisubeshi mon ni yotte ginzu
A Layman Reciting a Poem Before the Gate of a Brothel and then Returning

The girl in the pavilion has no mind but he has a mind.

A poet overflowing with poems, does his desire overflow too?

After the long rain, clear in the west, a little song at sunset;

So much feeling, lovable, the man leaning on the gate and singing.

A girl in the pavilion has no mind but he has a mind: On the one hand, the courtesan is mindless in the sense that she has no thought or does not care about the man singing at the gate, while he has a mind in the sense that he has the courtesan and his own unfulfilled desires in mind. On the other hand, "no mind" describes in Zen writings the enlightened person so often that it is hard to ignore that sense of the expression. Take, for example, Te-shan's statement, "Only when you have nothing in your mind and no mind in things are you vacant and spiritual, empty and marvelous." Ikkyū may be saying then that the courtesan, by virtue of the mindless performance of her role, is enlightened while the man at the gate still had his mind muddled by words and ideas which pour ceaselessly forth in poems. However, I think this should be taken as playful irony on the part of Ikkyū.
吸美人塩水

臨済児孫不識禅
正伝真箇瞎駒辺
雲雨三生六十劫
秋風一夜百年

bijin no insui o suu

rinzai jison zen o shirazu
shōden shin ko katsuro hen
un-u sanshō rokujū gō
shūfū ichiya hyakusen nen
Sipping a Beautiful Woman's Lascivious Fluids

Rinzai's descendants do not know Zen.
Correct transmission of the truth, this is with blind donkeys.
Cloud-rain, past, present and future, sixty kalpas,
Autumn wind, one night a 100,000 years.

Rinzai's descendants do not know Zen, the true teaching is with blind donkeys, but Ikkyū is the blind donkey so he has the true teaching. This assertion is reiterated again and again throughout the Kyūunshū. The second half of the poem shifts the subject to love's ability to make time relative. While making love, past, present and future, sixty kalpas of time might seem only an instant, yet one night spent thus might seem an eternity.
美人陰有水仙花香

楚白応望更応攀
半夜玉床愁夢顔
花絹一茎梅樹下
凌波仙子遠腰間

bijin no in suisenka no ka ari
sodai masa ni nozomubeshi sara ni masa ni
yozubeshi
hanya gyokushō shūmu no kao
hana wa hokorobu ikkei baiju no moto
ryōha no senshi yōkan o meguru
A Beautiful Woman's Dark Place has
the Fragrance of a Narcissus

The King of Ch'u's pavilion, one must regard from
afar and moreover climb.
The middle of the night, on the jeweled bed, a
bittersweet dream's face,
The flower opens under a branch of the plum
tree,
Delicately the narcissus revolves between thighs.

Dark place: The Chinese character here is simply yin of yin-yang,
the two principles, female and male, of the universe. Extended
from this cosmic meaning, the character is also used to denote the
vagina.
優遊且喜薬師堂　毒気便便は我腸
愧懣不書雪霜髪
吟尽厳寒秋点長

yūyū katsu yorokobu yakushidō
dokki bemen kore waga harawata
gizan kansezu sessō no bin
ginji tsukusu genkan shūten no nagaki o
I traveled leisurely to Yakushidō and rejoiced there;
Still, a poisonous spirit lingers in my guts;
Ashamed I am, not to be concerned with my hoary hair;
Singing till exhausted, severe cold, the melancholy note rings long.

This is the first of ten poems in this collection that mentions, in one way or another, Ikkyū's lover and attendant Shin. It was probably Ikkyū's first encounter with Shin because he said in the introduction to this poem that "on the fourteenth day of the eleventh month of the second year of Bunmei [1470], I traveled to Yakushidō and heard the blind girl sing love songs." Ikkyū was apparently a bit reticent at first to act on his inclination; he was a little ashamed to feel the rising of desires that make a mockery of the wisdom and dignity which should accompany his white hair.
憶昔新園居住時
王孫美誉聴相思
多年旧約即忘後
更愛玉壇新月姿

omou mukashi shin-en kyojū no toki
ōson no biyo kiite aiomou
tanen kyūyaku sunawachi bōjite nochi
nao aisu gyokukai shingetsu no sugata
I recall the old times living at Takigi,
You heard of the renown of the king's descendant
and loved him.
But after some years, old promises were forgotten.
Still all the more I love the form of the new moon on the jeweled stairs.

The king's descendant: A reference to Ikkyū's royal birth.
New moon on the jeweled stairs: An allusion to Li Po's poem "The jeweled stairs repine" in which the autumn moon stands for a woman's face. In Ikkyū's poem the new moon refers to Shin.
Ikkyū's prose introduction: "I lodged for some years in a small dwelling in Takigi. The attendant Shin, having heard of my appearance and manner, already held feelings of affection toward me. I, too, knew of it but remained undecided until now, the spring of Shimbo [1471], when I met her by chance in Sumiyoshi and asked her about her feelings. She replied in the affirmative."

This poem seems to indicate that there were relations between Shin and Ikkyū before this time. The prose passage is not explicit as to the exact nature of these relations, mentioning only that they knew of one another and that Ikkyū was indecisive in his actions.
森公乘興

蠅興盲女屢春遊
鬱鬱胸襟好慰愁
遮莫衆生之輕賤
愛着森也美風流

shinkō koshi ni noru
ranyo no mōjo shibashiba shunyūsu
utsuutsu tsaru kyōkin yoshi urei o isuru ni
samo arabā-are shujō no kyōsen suru koto o
aishi miru shin ya ga bi fūryū
Lady Shin Rides in a Cart

In the phoenix cart, the blind girl often goes on spring outings.

When my heart is oppressed, she likes to comfort my melancholy.

Even so most people make fun of her.

I love to see Shin, so fair a beauty is she.

Perhaps Shin was called on in the spring to entertain at some wealthy people's hana mi, "flower-viewing" and so was brought there in a cart. Ikkyū embellishes the scene and makes it an imperial phoenix cart. There is perhaps also an indication in this poem that people laughed at the relationship between Ikkyū and Shin, but if this was so, it is also obvious that he was not perturbed.
謝恩公深恩之願書

木細葉落更回春
長緑生花旧約新
森也深恩若忘却
無量億劫畜生身

sha shinkō shinon no gansho
ki shibomi ha ochite sara ni haru o kaesu
ryoku o chōji hana o shōjite kyūyaku arata nari
shin ya shinon moshi bōkyakuseba
muryō oku go chikushō no mi
Wishing to Thank Shin for My Deep Debt to Her

The tree budded leaves that fell but once more round comes spring;
Green grows, flowers bloom, old trysts are renewed.
Shin, if I ever forget my deep bond to you,
Hundreds of thousands of kalpas without measure, may I be born as a beast.

The love poems to and about the blind girl Shin are quite surprising. It is strange enough that it should be a Zen monk writing these poems, but that it should be a Zen monk over seventy years of age and well experienced in debauchery is all the more incredible. The poems display a youthful ardor, unexpectedly fresh and naive.

There is no biographical information about Shin besides that in Ikkyū's poems. He calls her Lady Shin in places but this almost certainly does not correspond to any real rank. She was most likely simply an attendant attached to the temple of Shūonan in Takigi. She seems to have sung professionally, not an uncommon profession for blind people in Japan. There is one portrait of her at the Shūonan. The painting is primarily a portrait of Ikkyū, but she appears in the lower half kneeling on a mat with a small hand drum.
弥勒下生
盲森林夜伴吟身
被底鸳鸯私语新
新约慈尊会晓
本居古仙万般春

miroku asan o yakusu
mō shin yaya ginshin ni tomonau
hitei no enō shigo arata nari
arata ni yakusu jison sane no akatsuki
honkyo kobutsu bampan no haru
Promise to be Born in the Time of Miroku

Blind Shin every night accompanies me singing;
Under the covers, mandarin ducks, intimate chattering always new;
Promise anew to meet in the dawn of Miroku's three meetings.
Here at the home of the old buddha all things are in spring.

Miroku: The buddha of the future who is supposed to appear 5,670,000,000 years after Shakyamuni's death. 9

Mandarin ducks: A common symbol for fidelity in China and Japan because they take only one mate for life.

Intimate chattering: An allusion to the "intimate chattering" of Hsuan-tsung and Yang Kuei-fei, "In the middle of the night when no one was around, they talked of rebirth, if in the air, then as birds, if on land, then as two branches of a tree. 10

The dawn of Miroku's three meetings refers to the time of Miroku's future enlightenment when he will speak three times to countless numbers. 11
手作戦手
手何似森手
自信公風流主
発病治玉茎萌
且喜我会裡象

waga te o yonde shin shu to nasu
waga te shin no te ni izure zo
mizukara shinzu kō wa fūryū no shu
hatsubyō gyokukei no hō o jusu
katsu yorokobu waga eri no shu
Calling my Hand Shin's Hand

My hand, how it resembles Shin's hand.
I believe the lady is the master of loveplay;
If I get ill she can cure the jeweled stem.
And then they rejoice, the monks at my meeting.

The jeweled stem: A Chinese metaphor for the penis.
良宵風月乱心頭
何柔相思身上秋
秋霧朝雲独蕭洒
野僧紙袖也風流

ryōshō no fūgetsu shintō o midaru
ikan sen sōshi shin jō no aki
shūmu chōun hitori shōsha tari
yasō ga shishū mata furyū
Fine evening, wind and moon, in my heart confusion.
How will our life fare as autumn overcomes us?
Autumn mist, morning cloud, alone so delicate and fair;
In the paper sleeves of a country monk, charming.

Ikkyū's prose introduction: "On the first day of the ninth month, my attendant Shin borrowed a paper cloak from a village monk to protect herself from the cold. How fresh, pretty and lovable!"

It may have been the vicissitudes of war that placed them in such poor circumstances that Shin had to borrow a paper cloak from a country monk in order to ward off the approaching cold. Paper cloaks were the cheapest and coarsest form of outer garment at the time; thus Ikkyū's praise of Shin's beauty in this humble garb is equivalent to someone today praising the beauty of a girl in blue-jeans.
百丈餅頭信施消
飯錢閻老不曾饒
盲女艱歌唫樓子
楚台暮雨滴蕭蕭

hyakujō jotō shinse shōsu
hansen enrō katsute yurusazu
mōjo ga enka rōshi o warau
sōdai no bou teki shōshō tari
Po-chang's hoe, my charitable donations are all spent.

Now, the old man of hell will not allow me rice money.

The blind girl's love songs, laughed at by the pavilion girls.

Ch'u's tower, sunset, rain dripping lonesomely.

Ikkyū's prose introduction: "The blind girl who serves me has strong feelings of love. She is about to die from not eating."

Ch'u's tower: Possibly a reference to the shrine that the king of Ch'u built for the sorceress of Wushan and, therefore, having an erotic connotation.
miyo miyo nehandō ri no zen
sekinen hyakujō kakutō hen
yayū ransuisu gabei no tei
enrō menzen hansen o ikan sen
Look, look, the Zen in sickness.
Long ago there was Po-chang and his hoe.
Night's intoxicated revelry beneath painted screens.
Facing the old man of hell, how about some rice money?

The exact situation surrounding the last two poems is unknown. It is clear, however, from the prose passage that Shin's nearness to death was caused by lack of food. The phrase used here means to fast rather than starve to death, and thus it suggests that Shin refused to eat lest Ikkyū should starve. The poems are very explicit about a lack of money to buy food.

In his anguish, Ikkyū reflects on Po-chang's rule of "a day of no work is a day of no eating" for Zen communities. Po-chang himself was supposed to have refused to eat when he got too old to do a day's work. This rule had long been abandoned by Rinzai temples in Japan. Ikkyū longs for the days when it was that simple, that you worked and then you ate. He is even remorseful about the years of pleasure and plenty spent in the brothels. The third lines of both poems conjure up brothel scenes. In the first poem he imagines how the brothel harlots would laugh at the naive songs of the blind girl, and in the second poem he remembers drunken evenings in gaudy surroundings.
白髪残僧八十年
吟望夜夜碧雲天
多情鶯被償前債
弾指三生約後縁

haku hatsu zen sō hachi jū nen
ginji nozomu yoyo hekiun no ten
tajō no en zensai o tsugunawaseraru
danshisu sanshō kōen o yakusu
I remain, white-haired old monk of eighty years,
Singing, looking up every night to blue sky and clouds.
Sad mandarin duck, redeeming former debts,
Snap fingers at past, present and future, the promise to love again.

Ikkyu's prose introduction: "It is late autumn, the season of giving winter clothes. For this reason I had some new clothes cut and had them offered for my late blind attendant Shin."

There is no record of what happened to Shin, but it must be concluded from this poem that she died before Ikkyu. We do not know under what circumstances or from what causes she died, but it is possible that the situation described in the preceding two poems actually led to her death. In this poem, Ikkyu is eighty, Shin is dead, and he is donating an offering of winter clothes to a temple in her honor as a token of his unforgotten ties to her.
辞世詩
十年花下理芳盟
一段風流無限情
惜別枕頭見女膝
夜深雲雨約三生

jisei no shi
jūnen hana no shita hōmei o osamu
ichidan no fūryū mugen no jō
sekibetsusu chintō ji-nyo no hiza
yoru fukakushite un-u sanshō o yakusu
**Departing From the World Poem**

Ten years ago, under the flowers, I made a fragrant alliance;
One step more delight, affection without end.
I regret to leave pillowing my head on a girl's lap.
Deep in the night, cloud-rain, making the promise of past, present and future.

This poem, like the "South of Mount Sumeru, who meets my Zen" verse (see Chapter II), is a death poem, yet the two are quite different in character. One has the ring of traditional Zen death poems, extremely confident, almost defiant, going to meet death in a warrior's manner. The other is gentle, nostalgic and fondly remembering. Ikkyū even expresses regret at leaving this world, a sentiment most unbecoming a Zen monk. Strangely enough, both poems are typical of Ikkyū at different times in his life. On both occasions, Ikkyū honestly expresses his feelings of attachment and longing with no thought given to whether they were appropriate for a Zen monk. This ability to accept without criticism whatever one feels as real and valid is a mark of true enlightenment. It shows trust in one's buddha nature.