

Asakusa. He looks back in the direction of a seven-star constellation (part of Hydra) marking the southern sky, the direction of the Island of Women.

As the sage began to fly off, Shidōken grabbed hold of his staff. He seemed to be flying behind the sage, but the next thing he knew he was sitting dazed on a low platform in a simple shed walled with hanging reed screens in a corner of the large Asakusa Kannon Temple compound. People of all ages were coming inside. As soon as they were seated on their stools, Shidōken took his wooden mushroom and began beating with it rhythmically on his low desk. *Ton-ton ton-ton ton-ton, tototon-ton tototon-ton.* “It’s time,” he began, “to hold on and ride on a high-flying story you’ll never believe.”

[*Fūrai Sanjin*, NKBT 55: 155–220, translated by Chris Drake]

A THEORY OF FARTING (HŌHI-RON, 1774)

This comic allegorical essay, which Gennai wrote toward the end of his career, belongs to the dangibon genre in that it includes a humorous debate between a believer in the artistic achievements of the Farting Man and a samurai who condemns that activity as immoral and dishonorable. “A Theory of Farting” is also considered to be an outstanding example of *kyōbun* (literally, crazy prose), or comic prose, the prose equivalent of *kyōka* (literally, crazy Japanese poetry), or comic waka. This genre, which was pioneered by Hiraga Gennai, Yomono Akara (1749–1823), and other *kyōka* poets, used vernacular prose for satirical and comic purposes. Of particular interest is the degree to which the Farting Man reflects Gennai’s own position as a partial outsider who constantly pointed out the limitations and contradictions of the samurai class and sought out new frontiers and new “ways” (professions). For mid-eighteenth-century audiences, Gennai’s achievements in botany generally were little more than a curiosity, but in his view, this profession had value precisely because he pursued it to perfection and did not rely on traditional authority or historical precedent, which tended to corrupt most artistic and scholarly “ways.” In this regard, “A Theory of Farting” is a satire of both contemporary samurai and Confucian values and the system of artistic houses and strictly codified traditions.

Some fools survive a serious illness by taking ginseng and then go hang themselves when they can’t pay for it. Other men love potentially poisonous blowfish soup yet manage to reach old age. Some housemaids get pregnant their very first time, while some hired men buy streetwalkers every night, never get syphilis, and still have noses. Ah, to put it a bit grandiosely, ah, is it all simply the will of heaven? And whether something interests people and becomes

popular—is it due only to the luck of the moment? Surely it also depends on how imaginative your basic concepts are.

When the kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō II⁸¹ was alive, he invented striking new makeup, costumes, staging, and interpretations for the roles his father had created. Nakamura Tomijūrō, on the other hand, develops novel dances for his women's roles; Nakamura Nakazō constantly discovers new ways of acting men's parts; and Yamashita Kinsaku II plays women realistically and with great charm. Ōtani Hiroji III articulates well and projects his powerful voice, and Arashi Sangorō II gets far inside the characters he plays and expresses their emotions. Onoe Kikugorō went from Edo to Osaka and captivated the city, while Segawa Tomisaburō left Osaka, changed his name to Kikunojō III, and awed Edo.

Places, too, change and thrive as new concepts appear. Pilgrims now throng to the Zenkō-ji temple in Kawaguchi, just north of Edo, to see public unveilings of its secret buddha image.⁸² In the city, people fill the Asakusa Kannon Temple and the small theaters around it, crowd into the Hachiman Shrine in Fukagawa to see sumō wrestling, and visit the Yoshiwara licensed quarter to watch male and female geisha improvise new farces in the street every fall. In the Kobikichō theater district, Masumi Katō V is now appearing at kabuki performances, demonstrating Katō-style puppet-play chanting there, while in the theaters in Fukiyachō the jōruri chanter Takemoto Sumidayū⁸³ is setting new standards for the Gidayū style. And then there are puppet variety shows, all-boy kabuki plays, mime shows, voice impersonations of famous actors, and Buddhist street preachers. Edo has prospered for some time now and has more kinds of shows than you can count, but reports and rumors about a “farting man” performing near Ryōgoku Bridge were causing heated discussions throughout the city.

Careful reflection shows that humans are microcosms of the universe. Heaven and earth thunder; humans fart. Yin and yang collide and chafe, sometimes reverberating deeply, sometimes releasing small, high sounds. But somehow the Farting Man was said to go far beyond the traditionally transmitted ladder method of crescendo farting and the prayer-bead technique of continuous farting. People said he produced the lonely cloth-fulling beat made

by a kabuki drum, slow kabuki shamisen strumming for scenes in the licensed quarter, music for a felicitous nō dance performed before kabuki plays, three-beat percussive phrases, a koto ensemble version of the song “Seven Plants,” drums, flutes, and gongs from the Gion Festival in Kyoto, dogs howling, cocks crowing, fireworks bursting above Ryōgoku Bridge, and a waterwheel creaking beside the Yodo River above Osaka. The man could perform long shamisen pieces from the kabuki dance plays *Young Woman at Dōjōji Temple* and *Wizard-Child Jidō*, short love songs, quiet background shamisen music from kabuki plays, an antiphonal folk song from Ise, and puppet-play chants in the Itchū, Hanchū, Bungo, Tosa, Bun’ya, Handayū, Geki, Katō, and Ōzatsuma styles. He would even do long Gidayū-style puppet plays. On request he would perform *Chūshingura* or *Epiphany at Yaguchi Crossing*, one act at a time, both the shamisen and the chanting. Word was that an incomparable master had appeared on the scene.

When I heard about the man, I knew I had to see him for myself, and I persuaded a couple of friends to go with me to the entertainment district at the west end of Ryōgoku Bridge. Just before we got to the bridge, we turned right and followed the wide avenue to a small theater with a high banner you couldn’t miss: “Old Tale Comes True—Man Makes Blossoms Bloom.”⁸⁴ From the midst of the pushing, jostling crowd of Buddhist monks and lay men and women, we looked up at the sign above the entrance. It showed a strange man with rear end lifted high, behind which were depicted, in various tints of ink, a group of unrelated objects, including the bell from *Young Woman at Dōjōji Temple* and the black mask from the auspicious Sanbasō dance. The sign seemed to be trying to depict a dream. An innocent person from the country who happened to stroll by and saw the sign would surely imagine the man was dreaming with his rear end. Still muttering, we went inside and saw a narrow red and white striped curtain stretched across the top of the stage. Below, on a low stage, sat the Farting Man and the musicians. He was of medium build and light-skinned, with sidelocks curving rakishly up like crescent moons. Beneath his deep blue summer robe he wore an undergarment of scarlet crepe silk.



At the entrance to the Farting Man's show at Asakusa, people discuss the show and look at the sign, which shows the man farting visual icons—such as the ladder and fulling mallet—representing the styles and pieces he performs. The bottom part of the banner says, “Man Makes Blossoms Bloom.” From the 1780 edition.

The man's greetings to the audience were clear and unaffected. His opening number, together with the musicians, was a fart version of the Sanbasō blessing dance.⁸⁵ He progressed rhythmically with *nō* drums and flutes, *toppa hyoro-hyoro, hiih-hiih-hiih*. Then he gave off a rooster's cry at the ruddy eastern sky, *bu-bu-buuu-buu*. Next came a waterwheel. He loosed a sloshing *buu-buu-buu* as he did cartwheels and made the exact sounds of water filling the buckets and then pouring out as it pushed the wheel around.

“Move on. Next show! Next show!”

We left the place to the beating of the large, show-ending drum. On the way back we dropped in on some friends, and when we told them we'd seen the Farting Man, they all began to debate about him. Opinion was divided between those who asserted the man was using medicine and those who argued he had some sort of hidden device. No conclusion was in sight.

“Gentlemen,” I finally said, “won't you please stop and listen? Yes, there is in fact a farting medicine on the market. A man in Osaka, Seiemon, who owns the Chigusaya Publishing House, also sells unusual herbal remedies. His signboard advertises both Argument

Laxatives and Fart Starters. But when I asked about the ingredients of the farting formula, I discovered it's only for nudging out stubborn farts, not for producing the artistic releases we saw today. As for a secret device, yes, it certainly sounds reasonable enough. But the man's not using a Takeda trick puppet stage with curtains and hidden strings and wheels. His stage is open on all sides. Besides, you can't control when farts come. There doesn't seem to be a device anywhere on him. If he does have one, he's been able to hide it from tens of thousands of people looking on only a few feet away, so it's virtually the same as if he were actually farting. If everyone calls them real farts, then it's better to go along with them and, as one sage put it, eat their dregs and stir up their mud. Just regard the man's deliveries as farts.

"It's very hard to get along in the world, and people rack their brains thinking of ways to separate other people from their money. They come up with all sorts of slightly novel designs and plans, but basically they're all the same. Yesterday's new seems old today, and the old gets even older. But the Farting Man is different. True, you can find gifted fictional farters in old tales. But what that Farting Man actually does right in front of your eyes can't be found in any old record or legend—in all the 2,436 years Japan's supposed to have existed, from the first year of Emperor Jinmu's reign all the way up until 1774. And you won't find anyone like him in China, Korea, India, Holland, or any country on earth. What brilliant conception! And what execution!"

Everyone there seemed impressed by my praise. Then, from the back of the room, came a voice: "Sir, your theory is completely wrong. Allow me to reply."

When I looked, I saw a samurai fresh from the country, head hard as rock. He was walking to the front of the room, and his expression showed outrage. "What we have just heard," he said, "is truly shameless. The authorities permit plays and other public performances only as a means of harmonizing people and revealing the proper Way of ruler and ruled, father and child, husband and wife, older and younger brother, friend and friend. For example, the total faithfulness that Ōboshi Yuranosuke shows to his lord in the puppet play *Chūshingura* makes him a model retainer. Or take the puppet play *Hiragana Tales of Glory and Decline*, in which Umegae

vows to get money for her husband even if she herself has to go to hell for it. When she does that, why, she's actually encouraging all women to be chaste and true. Even *freak* shows teach audiences that their own children will be punished if they commit bad deeds. The strangely shaped hunter's child on the stage, well, he was born that way because of his father's sinful hunting. *Freak* shows urge constant vigilance and demonstrate the chilling truth that retribution for bad deeds comes swiftly and without mercy. In the last few years, however, the people who put on these shows have completely abandoned morality. All they care about these days is making money. And now a 'farting man' is on exhibit! It's outrageous!

"One must absolutely never fart in public. For a warrior to fart during a formal meeting is an act so dishonorable it calls for suicide. And not only warriors. A rumor is going around about a high-class courtesan in Shinagawa who farted during an audience with some customers. Two well-known men happened to be there, a fish wholesaler from Odawarachō who uses the title *Ridō*⁸⁶ and a kabuki actor from Sakaichō he'd brought along with him, a man calling himself Mii. When these sophisticated celebrities laughed at the woman's fart, she couldn't bear it and promptly went into another room and prepared to kill herself.

"Some of the other women in the house saw what she was doing and tried to talk her out of it. 'They're both proud, experienced men who get around,' the woman retorted, 'and people listen to what they say. I know perfectly well they're going to spread nasty rumors. Pretty soon everybody in Edo is going to know about it. I'd rather kill myself than become famous for farting.' The two men said all sorts of things to calm the woman and swore they would never mention what had happened to anyone. 'No,' she protested, 'even if you promise now, later you'll tell people, and I couldn't live with that kind of shame. Please let me die.'

"She was in no mood to change her mind, and the two men were at their wits' ends. Finally, after they'd signed a formal pledge to keep the matter secret, the woman relented. It might seem strange to some, but the woman was actually prepared to kill herself. She knew that by doing something as disgraceful as farting she'd already committed professional suicide. And seeing her deep sense of shame, the two refined gentlemen who had gone too far swallowed

their pride, felt compassion for her, and wrote an amateurish pledge in order to save her life. It is all very touching, is it not?

“Such people know what shame is. But for someone to put up a sign beside a main street and fart right in front of people’s eyes, why, it’s vulgar and impudent beyond words! The man and his manager are willing to do anything at all for money. And those who watch him are dimwits. Yet you, sir, do nothing but mimic their adulation. I find your groveling praise of the man nothing short of disgusting. In China, wise people loathe even hearing immoral names like Well of Thieves or Mother-Conquering Village. Confucius was very clear. We must never to listen to what is improper. And never look at it, either!” Blue veins stood out on the samurai’s temples.

“Your words,” I replied, “are perfectly correct. Nevertheless, you still lack deeper understanding of the Way. Confucius valued even children’s songs, and I, too, have good reasons for praising the Farting Man. Everything between heaven and earth is naturally noble or base, high or low. At the farthest extreme of the low are usually placed urine and feces. In China, people show they despise something by calling it ‘dung earth.’ In Japan they say something is ‘like shit.’ Nevertheless, though dirty, shit and piss fertilize the various grains and feed the people. But simply to fart and momentarily feel good, why, that is completely useless and requires no talent. According to the *Book of Songs*, in heaven there is neither sound nor smell. In contrast, farts make sounds, although, unlike the sounds of large or small drums, they’re hardly listened to and enjoyed. And farts have smell, yet they can’t be used for incense like aloes wood or musk. Instead, they make you stink. When people say ‘onions, garlic, and a fistful of fart in your nose,’ they mean something smells pretty awful. Farts rise up from nothing and disappear into nothing. They’re completely useless, even as fertilizer. So it was only natural that the mad Buddhist preacher Shidōken began calling rotten, worthless Confucian scholars ‘farting Confucianists.’

“Until now farts have been completely rejected everywhere for being without value or significance. But the Farting Man is inspired. He’s hit on idea after idea and mastered numerous releases. And now he’s drawing such crowds that none of the other small theaters will be in business very long. Tomisaburō became a great kabuki star only after he began using the prestigious stage name Kikunojō II. But

farts have no hereditary titles, no fans to sleep with, and no rich patrons. They have only themselves, plainly, as they actually are. They ask to be judged for that alone. Using nothing but a two-inch hole, the Farting Man is blowing away all the other shows. Triumphantly, if I may put it that way, he's left the competition flatulent on their backs.

"How different he is from our professional musicians who go to a certified master to receive secret instruction on the proper way to articulate and chant so they themselves can later charge high fees to their own students. A good voice, however, is something you're born with. These musicians caw and croak like crows or night herons, imitating old pieces without putting any feeling into the phrases. They're ignorant of tempo changes in the prelude, main section, and finale and know nothing about vocalization or interpreting notation marks. They simply slaughter the words of the new puppet plays. The profession as a whole is in decline. But look at the Farting Man. He's invented everything by himself, without master or secret oral transmission. With an unspeaking rear end and uncomprehending farts, he's learned articulation and rhythmic breathing, he has a natural sense of timbre and pitch at all five tones and twelve semitones, and he's able to make so many clearly distinct sounds that his rear end is clearly superior to the voice of a second-rate puppet-play chanter. Call him one of a kind, call him a wonder. Truly he is the founder of the Way of Farting.

"But musicians aren't the only ones these days who are, as they say, 'shitbad.' Scholars stare at thousand-year-old wastepaper from China, and writers who use classical Chinese collect stray shavings from the works of Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, and the middle-Tang poets, heaping them into what they think are great pillars. Waka poets just sit around, but rice grains manage to stick to the bottoms of their feet, and they make a good living. Herbal doctors follow the Old Method or the Later Method and dispute loudly among themselves, but they can't cure ordinary ailments, while epidemics kill thousands. The people who call themselves haikai linked-verse masters suck up the drool of Bashō and Kikaku,⁸⁷ and tea ceremony masters try to look genteel and elegant as they lick the two-centuries-old turds of Sen no Rikyū and Sōtan.⁸⁸ The other arts are also atrophied. Artists don't use their own minds, so they can't invent or create, and their

efforts fall far short of the achievements of the past, on which they themselves rely so completely. But the Farting Man, he's using his rear end in a totally unknown way and making music that people of the past never heard. He's captured the imagination of the whole country.

"Chen Ping of Han once cooked some meat and took great care to give equal portions to all his guests. 'If I become an imperial minister,' he said, 'this is how I will govern.' Now what I say is this. It would be an incomparable service if some brilliant people were to show as much creativity as the Farting Man and invent new ways to help the people of this land. That man uses his mind and pursues things deeply, and look, even farting has reached a very high level.

"Ah, if those who wish to save the world and those who learn the various arts would exert themselves using all of their minds, their fame would resound through the land even more loudly than farts. If I were to say I've borrowed the sounds of farts in order to wake the despairing, the inexperienced, and the idle from their dreamlike torpor, that would smell of pure theory. Go ahead, call my argument empty as a fart. That objection, I say, is of less consequence than a fart."

[*Fūrai sanjin shū*, NKBT 55: 229–236, translated by Chris Drake]

1. Priest Sengaku (b. 1203) was the first significant scholar of the *Man'yōshū* (ca. 759), the first major collection of Japanese poetry.

2. Mount Ashigara is in Kanagawa Prefecture, near present-day Yokohama City.

3. Mount Ashitaka was a volcano on the south side of Mount Fuji.

4. Tago Shore, on the Pacific coast, faces the south side of Mount Fuji.

5. The Yoshiwara Plains, one of the fifty-three stations on the Tōkaidō, is in eastern Shizuoka Prefecture.

6. In verse capping (*maekuzuke*), one person, normally a judge or a marker, presents a short verse (*maeku*) normally consisting of fourteen syllables (7–7), to which another person adds a seventeen-syllable (5–7–5) verse (*tsukeku*). In line capping (*kamuritsuke*), a participant adds a twelve-syllable (7–5) verse (*tsukeku*) to a five-syllable line (*kamuri*) presented by a judge to create a seventeen-syllable hokku or haiku.

7. Ōtani Hiroji (1695–1747), an Edo actor, went to Osaka in 1723 to perform for one year at the Arashi Theater.

8. In *The Tale of the Heike* (chap. 4, sec. 11) Prince Takakura (1151–1180) fell

off his horse six times between Miidera Temple in Shiga Prefecture and Uji in Kyoto.

9. *Jitsugotoshi*, a male role in kabuki, was a person who maintained dignity, composure, and wisdom in tragic circumstances.

10. In five-syllable linked verse (*gomojitsuke*), a person adds a five-syllable line to a five-syllable line presented by the judge or marker.

11. Two theater districts in Edo.

12. *Kagonuke* (basket trick) was an acrobatic trick in which a person jumped through a bottomless basket. Since a horse cannot perform such a nimble trick, “horse’s basket trick” (*uma no kagonuke*) became a proverb for doing something thought to be impossible. The word *kagonuke* is also used to describe the act of entering through one door and escaping through another.

13. Hitoana (Human Cave), at the northwest foot of Mount Fuji, was considered a spiritual place where it was believed the Great Bodhisattva of Asama had resided.

14. Nitta Tadatsune (d. 1203), or Nitan no Shiro, was a warrior who served Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) and is known for defeating Soga Jūrō Sukenari at Mount Fuji.

15. The crest of the Kudō clan indicates that the dress is official attire.

16. Only warriors of high rank, monks, and ladies were allowed to wear white silk sleeves.

17. From the Hōreki era (1751–1764), it was popular to make summer pilgrimages to a Shintō shrine on Ō yama Mountain, in Sagami, present-day Kanagawa Prefecture.

18. Maidome was a type of tobacco produced near Kyoto.

19. Match rope was commonly used in theaters and ships because it lasted longer than tinder.

20. From 1709 it was the custom to perform a Soga play as part of the auspicious spring performances (*haru kyōgen*) of kabuki at the beginning of the year, in the First Month.

21. On the day before the beginning of spring (the last day of the lunar calendar year), a salt-cured red sardine was customarily placed on a holly tree branch at one’s gate to ward off evil spirits.

22. Shichizō refers to the actor Nakamura Shichisaburō II (1703–1774). Every year from 1745 to 1749, Shichisaburō played Sukenari’s role in Soga plays at the Nakamura Kanzaburō (Kanzō) Theater in Edo. The Nakamura Theater was one of the three major kabuki theaters of Edo, along with the Ichimura Theater and the Morita Theater.

23. Utagawa refers to the kabuki actor Sawamura Sōjurō II (1713–1770), also known as Utagawa Shirōgorō, who played the role of Sukenari at the Nakamura Theater in 1743.

24. The twenty-eighth day of the Fifth Month is the day on which the Soga brothers defeated Kudō Suketsune. The three major kabuki theaters of Edo deemed this Soga Festival day, and normally it marked the last performance of spring plays.

25. Mount Hōei, a bump on the side of Mount Fuji, is said to have been created by the eruption of Fuji in 1707.

26. Mononobe no Moriya (d. 587), who destroyed Buddhist temples and acted against Prince Shōtoku's desire to protect Buddhism, was admired by eighteenth-century Shintō followers who wanted to get rid of Buddhism.

27. Kajiwara Kagesue (1162–1200), a servant of the shōgun Minamoto Yoritomo, is depicted unfavorably in most kabuki plays, but in the nō play *A Quiver of Arrows* (*Ebira*), he is depicted favorably.

28. Mizuki Takejūrō (1674–1721) played Kudō Suketsune at the Ichimura Theater in the spring of 1721. One of the reviews at the time states that Mizuki's Suketsune was sympathetic and well mannered.

29. It is said that in order for one to become a demon (*oni*), one had to make a loincloth from a tiger's skin.

30. A paper robe and dark red marked the god of poverty.

31. Oshichi was a daughter of a grocer in Edo who was executed for having started a fire because she wanted to meet her lover. This story, which may be apocryphal, was first described by Ihara Saikaku's *Five Sensuous Women* (*Kōshoku gonin onna*, 1686) and then taken up in popular songs and the kabuki theater.

32. Seven-herb rice gruel, served on the seventh day of the New Year, is made by mixing together seven different chopped herbs with rice.

33. One legend states that when a hand basin is struck with a bamboo ladle, one gains wealth in the present life but spends his or her next life in hell. From the Genroku era (1688–1704), plays based on this legend were occasionally performed, one of which became a hit in 1739.

34. In a chivalrous commoner (*otokodate*) play, the protagonist is ready to fight the strong and help the weak for the sake of honor. For example, Sukeroku, the swashbuckling hero of *Sukeroku and the Flowering Edo Cherry*, is a chivalrous commoner who defeats a brutal samurai villain who is his rival for the favors of Agemaki, a Yoshiwara courtesan.

35. Blowfish (*fugu*) contains a venom that can cause paralysis and death when prepared incorrectly.

36. Bungo was a genre of jōruri songs that became extremely popular among Edo youth at the end of the Kyōhō era (1716–1736) and was known for its erotic quality. It was officially banned from Edo theaters in 1739.

37. Osan was executed in 1683 for having had an affair. Her story was first made famous by Ihara Saikaku in *Five Sensuous Women* (1686). In his jōruri play *The Calendar Maker* (*Daikyōji mukashi goyomi*), which was first performed at Osaka's Takemoto Theater in 1715, Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724) used the story of Osan's adultery but changed the plot so that she is saved at the end—a change that Kudō Suketsune objects to.

38. Kannon, the bodhisattva or goddess of mercy, manifests herself in various forms to save people in need. Bagyū here compares the spirit of Kūdo Suketsune—who manifests himself before Bagyū for selfish reasons without offering anything

in return—as a perverted form of the Kannon.

39. A Han-period yuefu ballad-poem reportedly sung to a harp by a Korean woman who had tried to stop her drunk husband from trying to cross a river. After she finished the song, she threw herself into the river.

40. A Chinese poet from Chu who lived in the second century B.C.E. In “The Fisher” a sage urges Qu Yuan, slandered and exiled, to be more flexible, while Qu Yuan righteously insists on his innocence. The poet committed suicide by jumping into the Miluo River.

41. Unlicensed prostitutes worked in various parts of Edo, many in newly developed areas known as “hells.”

42. Produce given by farmers to Edo landlords in return for shipments of human manure.

43. A noted eighth-century Buddhist monk. The ancient statue would be priceless.

44. Ducks (*kamo*) are homophonous with the famous Kamo god. “Shintō priest” (*negi*) is homophonous with “onion” (*negi*). These words became euphemisms for forbidden food.

45. Slang for “young male homosexuals.”

46. According to a legend dramatized in the nō play *Chrysanthemum Boy*, the Chrysanthemum Boy Sage was loved by a king until he was banished at sixteen; in exile he drank dew from chrysanthemums and gained immortality. “Chrysanthemum Seat” implies anus.

47. Young man loved by the duke of Wei in the Zhou period. Dong Xian, loved by the Han emperor Ai, became a powerful official. Meng Dongye (Meng Jiang) is a Tang-period poet reputed to have loved the poet Han Yu.

48. Kūkai (774–835), who founded the Shingon Buddhist sect in Japan.

49. “Master of Beauty” and guardian of Buddhist wisdom. In Japanese, *srii* (Master) becomes *shiri* (rear end).

50. Fighting for the Minamoto at the battle of Ichinotani in 1184, Kumagai unhorsed the Taira hero Atsumori on the beach and beheaded him. Enma is referring to a homoerotic version of the confrontation.

51. Younger brother of the shōgun, Minamoto Yoritomo.

52. A Taoist mystical phrase used in *Laozi* (sec. 55).

53. On a pole that Enma held were two demons with heads but no bodies. One saw through newly dead souls brought before Enma; the other sniffed out their true characters.

54. Ninth-century Buddhist priest. Enma is referring to the poem: “I plucked you, woman-flower, charmed only by your name—Do not tell others I fell and broke my vows” (*Kokinshū*, Autumn 1, no. 226). “Fall” also means “to break a vow of chastity.”

55. Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216), the poet and author of *An Account of My Hut* (*Hōjōki*), whose opening is quoted here. In the following lines, allusions to ancient poems overlap with contemporary scenes.

56. *Kokinshū*, Travel, no. 411, also sec. 9 of *The Tales of Ise*, by Ariwara no Narihira.

57. *Furitsutsu*, homophonous with “snows continuously,” a line from a poem about Mount Fuji by the ancient poet Akahito (*Shinkokinshū*, no. 675).

58. *Man'yōshū*, no. 320.

59. The man recalls a poem by the Chinese poet Su Dongpo (Su Shi, 1037–1101), “Prose Poem at the Red Cliff,” in which a lone poet hits the sides of a boat. Gennai is describing a kind of group ecstasy.

60. A reference to Ki no Tsurayuki's *Tosa Diary* and that text's allusion to two legendary Chinese singers.

61. Dragons traditionally rise into the sky, entering clouds and causing rain. This is an allusion to a legend that the Chinese poet Han Yu loved another poet, Meng Dongye, with Han Yu becoming the clouds and Meng, the older poet, becoming the dragon. The samurai, a lowly water spirit, symbolically represents his lord, the dragon.

62. Gennai himself, in the preface to *The Modern Life of Shidōken*.

63. Terms for older and younger male lovers in a relationship, a parody of the *Analec*s (12:5): “If the virtuous man is circumspect, blameless, and courteous, then every man in the world will be his brother.”

64. Kikunojō's family name, Segawa, means “River of Shallow Pools.”

65. *Man'yōshū*, no. 3342.

66. Ichikawa Danjuro II (1688–1758), admired for his mixture of rough, exaggerated acting and refined feeling.

67. The name of the temple is apparently Gennai's creation.

68. *Gyokuyō wakashū*, vol. 1, no. 144.

69. That is, reading literature from earlier ages. Evokes section 13 of Yoshida Kenko's *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*).

70. Reference to Tao Qian's (365–427) “Peach Blossom Spring,” in which the poet discovers a utopian community in a peach grove but is unable to return to it.

71. Suggests the Tokugawa shōgunate and the Edo period.

72. Refers to Itō Jinsai (1627–1705), a Confucian philosopher who established the Ancient Studies (*kogigaku*) school.

73. Refers to Aoki Kon'yō (1698–1769), a scholar of Confucianism and Dutch studies (*rangaku*) who gave advice to the bakufu on agricultural policy.

74. Refers to Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), an influential scholar of Confucian studies, and his followers. Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was a Song Confucian scholar who had a large impact on Japanese Confucian philosophy.

75. Dazai Shundai (1680–1747), a follower of Ogyū Sorai.

76. Literally, Sage Who Comes and Goes with the Wind, similar to Gennai's pen name, Vagabond Mountain Man.

77. Also a term for self-conceited egotists.

78. Customarily, high-ranking courtesans never slept with men before the third meeting.

79. Refers to Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), a Japanese Confucian scholar.

80. The statue of Kannon is in the shape of a dildo.

81. Ichikawa Danjūrō (1688–1758). The other actors mentioned are

contemporaries.

82. An especially popular unveiling was held from the Second to the Fourth Month of 1774, when a large number of Edo residents traveled up the Ara River on boats to worship. The temple raised a tremendous amount of money, and gamblers lined the road outside the gate.

83. Chanted Gennai's puppet play *Epiphany at Yaguchi Crossing* (1770).

84. Refers to the folktale "The Old Man Who Made Blossoms Bloom," in which an honest man is helped by the gods and all his acts have good results; even ashes sprinkled on a tree turn to blossoms in front of a lord, and he is rewarded. However, when his neighbor imitates him, hoping for the same rewards, the neighbor fails. Similarly, in the Muromachi-period otogi-zōshi popular tale *The Tale of Fukutomi*, the protagonist, Fukutomi, has an almost divine ability to fart artistically, and he is rewarded by a lord. However, when his covetous neighbor asks for instruction, receives pills, and performs before the lord, his farting turns to diarrhea and soils the lord's garden.

85. The Sanbasō, the felicitous dance from the "god" nō play *Old Man (Okina)*, was performed early in the morning on kabuki stages before the day's performance began.

86. Rido was one of the famous "Eighteen Great Connoisseur Playboys" (Dai-tsu) of the 1770s.

87. Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) and his Edo disciple Kikaku (1661–1707) were virtually worshiped by later-eighteenth-century Edo poets.

88. Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591), one of the great masters of the art of tea and the pioneer of *wabicha*, and his grandson Sen Sōtan (1578–1658), who systematized and popularized it. By Gennai's time, the art of tea had become highly codified.