

Amenimo Makezu (Unbeaten by Rain)

by Kenji Miyazawa (1896–1933)



Unbeaten by rain
Unbeaten by wind
Unbowed by the snow and the summer heat
Strong in body

Free from greed
Without any anger
Always serene

With a handful of brown rice a day
Miso and a small amount of vegetables suffice
Whatever happens
Consider yourself last, always put others first
Understand from your observation and experience
Never lose sight of these things

In the shadows of the pine groves in the fields
Live modestly under a thatched roof

In the East, if there is a sick child
Go there and take care of him
In the West, if there is an exhausted mother
Go there and relieve her of her burden
In the South, if there is a man near death
Go there and comfort him, tell him "Don't be afraid"
In the North, if there is an argument and a legal dispute
Go there and persuade them it's not worth it

In a drought, shed tears
In a cold summer, carry on
Even with a sense of loss

Being called a fool
Being neither praised nor a burden

Such a person I want to be

(Translated by Catherine Iwata, Rev. Fredrich Ulrich, Sophie Sampson, Helene Bartos, Minaeri Park, Mokmi Park, Yasuko Akiyama) March 27, 2011



A poet and author of children's literature in early Showa period Japan. Kenji Miyazawa (1896–1933) was also known as a devout Buddhist and social activist.

After Miyazawa's death, a single, black notebook was found in a pocket of his favourite trunk. This is the famous "Ame ni mo makezu" notebook. The poem is written in midst of his repetitious copying of "namu myoho renge kyo (Lotus Sutra)" which shows his earnest nature and his reflections on letting go of the desire for pleasure.

When this "Ame ni mo makezu" was written, we can assume that Kenji probably had a hunch that he was going to die. With such thoughts lingering in his mind, his earnest wish in the last line – "the person I strive to become" – can only strike at our hearts with a deep resonance.

In his later years, he formed the "Rasu Farmers' Association" in order to live in closer harmony with the agriculturists he so admired. In Showa 11 (1936) a stone monument was erected with the opening line, "In the shade of pine-tree grove in the middle of a field c". Even to this day, many people visit this site.

The Miyazawa Kenji Memorial Society Foundation