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Ikkyū

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HOLY PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia

VOLUME 2: ENTRIES H TO P

Phyllis G. Jestice, Editor

Foreword by Lionel Rothkrug

A B C  C L I O

Santa Barbara, California

Denver, Colorado

Oxford, England

sponse to Protestantism. Ignatius himself described his new order as an army for Christ, a notion with real resonance for supporters of the nascent Catholic Reformation.

—Eric Nelson

See also: Catholic Reformation Saints; Christianity and Holy People; Dominic; Francis of Assisi; Guidance; Mission; Reform and Reaction; Suffering and Holy People; Xavier, Francis

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Ikkyu

(1394–1481 C.E.)

Zen Buddhist monk, scholar, artist

Ikkyu Sojun, an irreverent Zen Buddhist monk, scholar, poet, painter, and calligraphy master who rebuilt Daitokuji temple and influenced the early development of virtually all Zen arts of the Muromachi period (1333–1573), stands out as both the strangest and most human of medieval Zen masters.

Born as the natural son of the Japanese emperor Go-Komatsu and a court noblewoman in 1394, Ikkyu was a victim of court intrigue while still in the womb. As a result, his mother was forced to give birth in the house of a commoner. Raised as a foundling in Ankokuji temple, at sixteen Ikkyu became the disciple of Ken'o Soi, under whom he began a strict Zen training regimen. By the late 1420s, he had settled in the port city of Sakai, where he began to develop his infamous "Crazy Cloud" Zen by frequenting brothels and wineshops and writing sensuous love poetry. Ikkyu soon began to attract the attention of many well-known literary and artistic figures of the day, who enshrined his irreverent ways in poetry and song. Despite his status as a longtime critic of abuses at the temple, in 1474 Ikkyu became Daitokuji's forty-seventh abbot. His waning years were spent at Takigi, between Kyoto and Sakai, and he died in 1481.

Ikkyu was enormously influential on the various Zen arts evolving in the Muromachi period. His disciple Murata Shuko (1422–1490) became Japan's first official tea master, and his aesthetic ideas also had direct impact on Konparu Zenchiku (1405–1467), who developed the bare stage setting of Noh drama. In poetry, his work reflects the movement

from *renga* (linked verse) to haiku, which remains Japan's most distinctive poetic form. Ikkyu's main poetic work, *Kyounshu* (Crazy Cloud anthology), is a collection of more than 1,000 Chinese poems, many of which are sensuous love poems laced with double entendres. Ikkyu openly espoused Chinese Master Sung-yuan's (1139–1209) "Red Thread Zen," which taught that since man was inescapably connected with woman by birth, eliminating sexual desire was unnatural. He openly kept a mistress, a younger blind singer named Shin (or Mori) with whom he had a son.

Above all, Ikkyu hated the hypocrisy he witnessed among the religious institutions of his day, including most of his fellow priests at Daitokuji. Yet he fought hard for the preservation of Daitokuji's traditions. Not simply a rebel without a cause, Ikkyu aimed to shock others into rethinking their Zen practice (indeed, his adopted name, Sojun, means "essence of purity"). Perhaps fittingly, his legend lives on in modern Japan not through grandiose hagiography but rather as Ikkyu-san—a brilliant and mischievous imp in a popular children's cartoon.

—James Mark Shields

See also: Aesthetics and Holy People; Morality and Holy People; Reform and Reaction; Sexuality and Holy People

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Iloibonok

Maasai prophet-diviners

Iloibonok (*oloiboni*, singular) are male prophet-diviners believed by Maasai and other related groups in East Africa to be the direct descendants of the Maasai divinity Eng'ai through their mythical apical ancestor Kidongoi. Their special relationship as intermediaries with Eng'ai is evidenced by their array of special powers, which include prophecy, divination, ritual protection, sorcery, and healing.

As one early Western observer has noted, "The efficacy of the lybon [*sic*], or medicine-man, lies not in any innate ability of his own, but in his power of intercession with Ngai, who works through him, and imparts magical virtues to various objects" (Thomson 1968 [1885], 260). Their main method of divination is to use the complex Maasai numerology of auspicious and inauspicious numbers to analyze