A Study of Saigyō

with

Translations of His Poems in the Shinkokinshū

Robert G. Sewell

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Introduction

Saigyō (1118-1190) lived in a period marked by turbulence and rivalry. Following the erosion of the dominance of the Fujiwara family in the mid-eleventh century, aristocratic control over Japanese society began to weaken. The process intensified during the twelfth century when the military clans came into conflict. In the Gempei War (1180-1185) the most powerful military clans, the Taira and the Minamoto, vied for national supremacy. The establishment of a military government in Kamakura by the victorious Minamoto ultimately made the duties of the court nobility merely empty ritual. While the role of the court became increasingly superfluous in the society at large, zeal and competition among courtiers in the world of poetry became more intense. Being published in an imperial anthology became a form of immortality for the court poets. The conservative and scholarly school of court poets, the Rokujō, disturbed by the innovations of the rival Nijo school, competed with them for the esteemed honor of compiling these anthologies commissioned by emperors. Because he had become a priest, Saigyō was able to remain aloof from these conflicts. His poetry reflects his lack of involvement with
contemporary disputes. It is admired for its directness of style and concern with personal experience in an era when poetic artifice was the rule. At the same time, the melancholy tone of Saigyō's poetry is considered characteristic of the medieval period.

This essay presents an account of Saigyō's life as well as an assessment of his poetic accomplishments. Original translations of Saigyō's ninety-four poems in the Shinkokinshū, the eighth imperial anthology completed in 1206, are offered as well.
The Life of Saigyō

The image of Saigyō as an exemplary medieval recluse has long lived in the imagination of the Japanese. Details of his life, however, have been obscured by legend until quite recently. From a thorough study of currently available biographical material, scholars have constructed a far more complex picture of Saigyō than traditional conceptions of the poet suggest. The view of Saigyō as a remote priest has some validity since he frequently withdrew from society for the practice of religious austerities. But Saigyō always maintained contact with secular acquaintances; moreover, throughout his long life, he met many of the outstanding representatives of the factions struggling for power during the twelfth century.

The legendary figure of Saigyō emerges from several biographies written soon after his death by people who had known him. These accounts frequently romanticized his life as a wandering poet-priest. Among these early biographies of Saigyō, the Senjūshō is one of the most extensive. While this work had been accepted as an autobiography, textual analysis reveals that the Senjūshō could not be a work by Saigyō, since
its style and the terms used in it are not characteristic of the poet, and since certain historical references are unquestionably incorrect. It is now thought to be the work of friends of Saigyō written after the poet's death. The Senjūshō discusses Saigyō's principles of life, poetry and religion, describes a number of episodes which took place during his wanderings, and comments on famous priests and literary figures of the period.\(^1\) Other early biographies of Saigyō include the Saigyō monogatari, Saigyō isshōgai-zōshi, Saigyō shonin hosshin-ki, and others.\(^2\) The Saigyō monogatari, for instance, was an expansion of the explanatory notes attached to the illustrations in the Saigyō monogatari emaki, a book of illustrations depicting the life of the poet by the artist Tosa Tsunkata of the mid-Kamakura period.

Many anecdotes about Saigyō, most of which are apocryphal, are found in a variety of collections of folk tales such as the thirteenth century Chōmei hosshinshū, and Ima monogatari. The Ima monogatari is a collection of tales from the twelfth and thirteenth century compiled by Fujiwara Nobuzane (ca. 1176-ca. 1266). In this work it is related

\(^{1}\)Fujioka Sakutarō, Kamakura-Moromachi jidai bungaku-shi (Tokyo, 1915), pp. 476-478.

\(^{2}\)These works are discussed in Kazamaki Keijirō, Saigyō (Tokyo, 1947), p. 7.
that Saigyō thought he would like to have Fujiwara Shunzei (1114-1204), a friend and poet, include one of his poems in the Senzaishū, the imperial anthology Shunzei was preparing, but then changed his mind, feeling that it was not worth the effort.3

One of the oldest critical works about Saigyō is the Gotoba-in gokuden. This is a record of the emperor Gotoba’s remarks on Saigyō and poetry in general and is still accepted as critically sound.4 Gotoba, an accomplished poet himself, oversaw the editing of the Shinkokinshū. His admiration for Saigyō was based on a profound understanding of his works. Gotoba calls Saigyō "a natural poet" as opposed to the dominantly artificial aristocratic poets.5 The Guishō, spuriously attributed to Fujiwara Teika, is another work concerning poetic style and poets which contains fictitious anecdotes about Saigyō.6

With the exception of the Gotoba-in gokuden, these


4 Kazamaki, p. 8.


6 Kazamaki, p. 8.
works contain biographical material of varying degrees of accuracy and help promote the traditional concept of Saigyö as a remote medieval recluse. Saigyö's own works, including the Sankashū, Monjushū, Monjozanshū, Ihon sankashū, Sankashin-jushū, Mimosusogawa utaawase, Miyakawa utaawase, and Saigyö shonin danshō, provide us with the most accurate information for assembling his biography. The value and extent of these works has been recognized only in the last thirty years. From the extensive introductory remarks which precede many of the poems they include, and from the poems themselves, a wealth of biographical information emerges. The first five of the above-mentioned works are essentially different versions of Saigyö's complete works. It is believed that they span the whole of Saigyö's life up to his trip to the Tōhoku region or the Eastern provinces between 1186 and 1187. The two utaawase were compiled after his return from this trip, while the Saigyö shonin danshō is based on lectures and poems delivered at the Ise shrines in 1185.

Probably the most extensive and recent work analyzing Saigyö's works and the research done on them is Kubota 6hōichirō's Saigyö no kenkyū. It is on Kubota's "Saigyö

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7See Kazamaki's Saigyö, pp. 9-16, for a summary of twentieth century Saigyö research up to 1947.
nempyō within this book that the following biography is primarily based.

Saigyō was born in 1118. His mother was the daughter of Minamoto Kiyotsune and his father was Satō Yusukiyo. Saigyō's parents were of the Satō military clan, which was descended from a branch of the Fujiwara. The child was named Narikiyo. Saigyō's family, guards at the palace in Kyoto, was well-educated, and their military duties were confined more to ritual than to combat. Saigyō's brother, Nakakiyo, became the body-guard of a regent. Of Saigyō himself nothing is known until 1129.

In that year Saigyō met and studied with the controversial poet Minamoto Shunrai (ca. 1057 - 1129). Shunrai, who compiled the fifth Imperial anthology, the Kin'yōshū, between 1124 and 1127, greatly impressed Saigyō. Throughout his subsequent life, his poetry was greatly influenced by Shunrai's insistence on a flexible and broad use of diction, and on the "lofty and noble" (kedakaku tōjirōki) style in poetic composition. At the age of fourteen Saigyō made the acquaintance of Fujiwara Shunzei, who was destined to become a leading figure in the poetry circles of the capital. They met either at the

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8 Kubota Shōichirō, Saigyō no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1962), pp. 763-781.
home of Fujiwara Tametada in Tokiwa or through the Tokudaiji family, whom Saigyō was soon to serve as a warrior. Tametada, a poet, was married to one of the ladies-in-waiting attached to the empress Taiken-mon-in, a Tokudaiji. Tametada appears to have been the first person to recognize Saigyō's abilities as a poet and to train him seriously in the art of poetic composition. Tametada's three sons, known as the Sanjaku of Ōhara, together with Shunzei led the poetry circle of which Saigyō was a member. Saigyō's position in society as a warrior restricted him from attaining admittance into any other aristocratic poetry circles.

At the age of fourteen or fifteen Saigyō became a body-guard for Tokudaiji Saneyoshi, the head of the Tokudaiji clan. His relationship with this family proved to be significant. The Tokudaiji were prominent in court circles since they were related to the imperial family through marriage. Akiko, a Tokudaiji woman, was a consort of the emperor Toba (r. 1107-1123). When their son became the emperor Sutoku (r. 1123-1140), Akiko took the name Taiken-mon-in.10 Saigyō

9Sanjaku means the Three Jaku, referring to the priestly names which Tametada's sons assumed upon becoming priests—Jakunen, Jakucho, and Jakuzen. Ōhara is the district in Kyoto where they lived.

10Upon the ascension of their sons, the mothers of the emperors changed their names and add the suffix "mon-in." Throughout this essay this woman is referred to as Taiken-mon-in.
greatly admired the empress who appreciated the poetic talents of the youthful Saigyō. He was friendly with many of the empress' ladies-in-waiting, and exchanged poems with them long after the death of Taiken-mon-in in 1145. Crossing the boundary which normally separated men of different ranks, a friendship based on a common interest in poetry sprang up between Taiken-mon-in's son, the emperor Sutoku, and Saigyō which was to continue throughout their lives. Both men emphasized the expression of spontaneous sentiment in their poetry at a time when poetic artifice was common.11 The Tokudaiji family was itself known for its poetic achievements; both Saneyoshi and his son, Kinyoshi, were poets of some accomplishment.

Through his relationship with the Tokudaiji, Saigyō came to the attention of the ex-emperor Toba, Taiken-mon-in's husband and Sutoku's father. In 1136 the ex-emperor asked Saigyō to join his Shitahokumen forces.12 Following acceptance of this position, Saigyō was allowed to participate in many activities of the court. In the fall of the same year

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11 See Fujioka Sakutarō, Kamakura-Muramachi jidai bungaku-shi (Tokyo, 1915), pp. 505-516 for a thorough discussion of their relationship.

12 The ex-emperor maintained his own court and armed forces after his abdication in 1123 in keeping with the In-sei of "government by ex-emperor" which was established during this period. By this system ex-emperors, freed from daily court rituals, actually could exert more influence than the reigning emperors.
in which he became Toba's warrior, Saigyō was present on the occasion of Chūnagon Munetsuke's offering chrysanthemums to the gardens of Toba's palace. At Tokudaiji Kinshige's suggestion, Saigyō and others wrote poems about this occasion. These are Saigyō's oldest surviving poems.

It is recorded that in 1138, when Saigyō was twenty, he had both a wife and a child. However, there is little information about them. From some of his poems written during this same year, we learn that Saigyō began to long for the priest's life. He visited a friend, Kūnin, at Hōrin-ji with the poet Saiju. On this occasion the three of them wrote renga (linked-verse) and waka together.

On the twenty-second month of 1139 the ex-emperor Toba as well as Tokudaiji Saneyoshi and Saigyō previewed the preparations for the Buddhist ritual to be held upon the completion of the three-storied tower of Anrakuju-in. This would seem to indicate that Saigyō had relatively free contact with court society at this time. Again, in the same year, we find that he composed poems upon viewing Shinto kagura dances and music being performed in the imperial palace.

The twenty-second year of Saigyō's life (1140) began rather lightheartedly with his composing poems upon hearing the bells announcing emperor Sutoku's departure on a pilgrimage, and by his visiting friends in the Higashiyama
district of Kyoto. Yet it was in this year that Saigyō decided to enter the priesthood. The motivation for his decision to become a priest has been widely speculated upon by Saigyō scholars. Generally they fall into three categories: a Buddhist awareness of life, a poetic impulse, and an unhappy love affair.

The reason given most frequently for Saigyō's abandoning the world is that he had at an early age developed a keen sense of the transitory nature of the world. In part this awareness is attributed to Saigyō's deep sensitivity. This innate sensitivity was apparently reinforced by Saigyō's perception that the elegance of court life would diminish as the old social order broke down. It was in fact in the next year that his friend, the emperor Sutoku, was forced to abdicate.

Fujioka Sakutarō, a prominent Saigyō scholar, contends that Saigyō entered the priesthood in order to devote himself fully to poetry. The secular poets of the day, Fujioka asserts, were aristocrats who in general wrote poetry as a diversion for employing all the vain mannerisms characteristic of their clan's style. Clans had schools of poetry identified with them. In such a literary milieu, there was little place for the direct and vivid expression of Saigyō's
poetry, which was very much concerned with his personal reactions to nature. Fujioka concludes that, in becoming a priest, Saigyō sought a way of life which would give him freedom to develop his own poetic style.¹³

Several scholars suggest that Saigyō entered the priesthood because of an unhappy love affair involving a woman of higher rank. Kubota Shōichirō, for instance, tells us that Saigyō had an "intense and painful love experience" some time before he became a priest.¹⁴ Kazamaki Keijirō indicates that Saigyō regarded his feelings for this woman as sinful and that he had difficulty suppressing the attachment even after becoming a priest.¹⁵ Several of Saigyō's love poems written soon after he entered the priesthood appear to deal with this unhappy affair.¹⁶ While polygamy and to a large extent promiscuity were common in Heian court society, romantic attachments between those of different rank were totally unacceptable. This love, so contrary to the rigid class structure,

¹³Fujioka, pp. 499-500.

¹⁴Kubota, p. 129.

¹⁵For a discussion of this affair see Kazamaki Keijirō, Saigyō (Tokyo, 1947), pp. 168-171.

¹⁶Two poems in the Shinkokinshū specifically refer to his love affair (see poems nos. 48 and 49.) All of his poems in the Shinkokinshū, however, deal with some aspect of unfulfilled love.
could not be fulfilled.

It seems clear that Saigyo's decision to enter the priesthood was influenced by several factors: his Buddhistic awareness of the ephemeral nature of life, his poetic aspirations, and his unhappy love affair. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that becoming a priest or nun in Japan was a convenient path for those who were seeking not a cloistered existence, but simply freedom from the entanglements of daily life. This lack of deep conviction about the holy life is illustrated by the fact that frequently when aristocratic Heian ladies became nuns, they took the tonsure symbolically, merely trimming the ends of their body-length hair. It is also necessary to be aware that entering the holy life did not indicate that all communications with one's former life came to an end. The course of events in Saigyo's life illustrates this, for, while his relations with the aristocracy in Kyoto lessened after he became a priest, he was never totally isolated from society.

Students of Saigyo believe that there is ample evidence in his work to prove that he made a realistic appraisal of his position in court society and of declining court life itself before becoming a priest. This realistic and decisive aspect of Saigyo's character is considered unusual in priests of the time, most of whom were
disenchanted aristocrats. Saigyō manifested this strong will throughout his life, expressing it through the formulation of a new approach to poetry, and through frequent journeys away from familiar surroundings for the purpose of engaging in intense introspection.

It was on the fifteenth of the tenth month of 1140 that Saigyō became a priest. At that time he took the priestly name Saigyō. Saigyō, which means "going west," refers to his spiritual journey toward the Western Paradise. After composing farewell poems to the ex-emperor Toba and to others, Saigyō spent the winter in the mountain of Kurama, a place for the training of neophyte priests near Kyoto. He left behind his wife and daughter.

In the first few years of his life as a priest, Saigyō lived at several Buddhist sites around the capital such as Higashiyama, Saga, and Okurayama. The poems he composed at this time expressed his thoughts "on leaving the world." They reveal a critical attitude toward the existing society. Some were written in the popular twelfth century form, hyakushu uta, or hundred poem sequence.

In the following years a number of events deeply affected the life of the court and Saigyō's relationship to it. In 1141 under parental pressure emperor Sutoku abdicated. His father, the ex-emperor Toba, impugned Sutoku's
legitimacy since his mother, Taiken-mon-in gave birth to him only a year after she had left the service of Toba's grandfather, the ex-emperor Shirakawa to become Toba's consort. Toba then elevated the son of his favorite consort Bifuku-mon-in to the throne as emperor Konoe. This act intensified the bad feelings between Sutoku and Toba, who became increasingly influential as the sole ruling ex-emperor after the death of his grandfather, Shirakawa, in 1129.17

Taiken-mon-in and several of her ladies-in-waiting became nuns on the sixteenth day of the second month of 1142. Shortly thereafter Saigyō visited Fujiwara Norinaga who sixteen years later banded together with Sutoku in the Hōgen Insurrection against another of Toba's sons, the emperor Go-Shirakawa. At Norinaga's suggestion, Saigyō copied a portion of the sutra which had inspired Taiken-mon-in to become a nun. At the bidding of one of Taiken-mon-in's court ladies, Chunagon, Saigyō also wrote poems related to the twenty-eighth chapter of the Lotus Sutra. It is recorded that his friend, Shunzei, composed poems with him on this occasion.

Two years later, when he was twenty-six, Saigyō was asked by Fujiwara Tametada and his three sons, the Sanjaku,

to view the manuscripts of the Shikashū, the sixth imperial anthology. Fujiwara Akisuke compiled this anthology at the request of the ex-emperor Sutoku in 1144. On this occasion there was an exchange of poems among Saigyō, Jakuchō, and others. Some scholars insist, however, that these events took place when the Shikashū was revised, that is, when Saigyō was between the ages of thirty-four and thirty-eight.

The death of Taiken-mon-in on the twenty-second of the eighth month of 1145 deeply saddened Saigyō. It is generally believed that his desire to travel to Mutsu province stemmed from this event. He had seen the emperor's mother and her elegant court ladies residing in the rude huts of retreat where she eventually died. This vividly illustrated to Saigyō the transient nature of the world, convincing him of the need to follow a more disciplined Buddhist life. In late spring of 1146 lady Horikawa, one of the court ladies attached to Taiken-mon-in, and Saigyō exchanged poems in memory of Taiken-mon-in. After lady Horikawa and lady Chūnagon came out of mourning for their deceased mistress, Saigyō visited them at Ninna-ji, Nishiyama, and Ogurayama where they were living secluded lives. They exchanged poems upon Saigyō's visits. 18

18 For the exchange between Saigyō and lady Horikawa see poem 93.
Around this time, Saigyo wandered to various temples in the home provinces and met many religious figures. Late in 1146 Saigyo attended a poetry gathering held by the poet-priest, Gakuga-no-Rokujo Fusa of the Ninna-ji. And some time between 1142 and 1146 he visited the priest Kakuyo in Nara at Houn-in of Todai-ji. Toward the end of his life he would travel to Mutsu in search of gold for this temple. During this same period, several poems were composed by Saigyo in which place names such as Ise, Yoshino, and Kiso were mentioned. These indicated an increasing interest in travel which provided new inspiration for his poetry and his life, both of which had been growing stagnant in familiar surroundings.

In late spring of 1147, Saigyo visited Sai-in of Bosatsu-in no saki, an unmarried princess serving at the Kamo shrine. He offered her a poem expressing his farewell before leaving on a long journey. From this poem it is inferred that at about this time Saigyo, who was now twenty-nine, set out on his pilgrimage to Mutsu province.\(^{19}\) The trip was undertaken at a leisurely pace. In autumn Saigyo crossed the border of Shiraka, and then went by way of the Pines of Mukuma, the Bridge of Omowaku and Natori river. He arrived in Hiraizumi.

\(^{19}\) Mutsu was a province in the extreme north-eastern section of Honshu island. Mutsu was also called Michi.
in Mutsu on the twelfth day of the tenth month. In a heavy snow storm Saigyō immediately proceeded to Fujiwara Hidehira's Koromo-gawa palace. He stayed with Hidehira in Hiraizumi until the next spring, when he viewed cherry blossoms at Mt. Tsukaine in Hiraizumi. During the third month he traveled through the province of Uzen where he saw the cherry blossoms at Reizen-ji on Mt. Taki. After crossing through Shimotsuke province, Saigyō returned to the capital some time between the autumn and winter of this year. One of the poems which remains from this trip was written when Saigyō visited the location of the tomb of the tenth century court noble, Sanekata, in the district of Natori in Mutsu. Sanekata was exiled to Mutsu because he was involved in an argument at the court.

When he returned from Mutsu in 1148, Saigyō established himself at the Shingon temple on Mt. Kōya in Kii province, approximately fifteen miles from the capital. Kōya-ji became the center of Saigyō's life from this time until he moved to Ise province in 1180. Some scholars are of the opinion that during his first year at Mt. Kōya Saigyō made two pilgrimages to Mt. Ōmine. Kubota Shōichirō, however, believes these incidents took place during an earlier training

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20 See poem 27.
period.\textsuperscript{21} Saigyo wrote several poems about these journeys.

Although Saigyo lived on Mt. Koya, he remained in contact with his friends in Kyoto. At some time in 1149, Saigyo came down from Mt. Koya and escorted lady Chūnagon and lady Sochi, two former ladies-in-waiting to Taiken-mon-in, from Kokawa-ji where they had been living secluded lives, to the Bay of Waka. And at some time between 1143 and 1150, Saigyo mingled with old friends when he saw a draft of the Kyuan hyakushū or, Kyuan Hundred-Poem Sequence, ordered by the ex-emperor Sutoku and compiled by Tokudaiji Kinyoshi.

In 1151 one of Saigyo's poems was selected for the Shikashū. It was entered in the anthology as an "anonymous" poem since poems by persons of his status would not ordinarily be included in an aristocratic collection. And in this same year Saigyo was asked by Sadanobu of Seson-ji to find aid for the construction of the Kannon-ji.

These meetings with friends, however, were not frequent, since most of Saigyo's time was spent either in the company of priests on Mt. Koya, or alone on religious pilgrimages. Beginning in 1152, and for seven years thereafter, Saigyo would each fall go off on journeys of contemplation and self-discipline. In 1154, Saigyo and the two priest-poets,

\textsuperscript{21} Kubota Shōichirō, pp. 245-249.
Sairen and Saijū, undertook a trip to Nagisa-in. In 1155 he exchanged poems on Mt. Kōya with Jakuzen (one of the Sanjaku) who had just become a priest. Between 1152 and 1155, Saigyō travelled in the Western Provinces and visited the Ichi-no-miya shrine in the province of Aki. While these journeys were undertaken primarily for religious reasons, they also provided new inspiration for his poetry.

It was also at this time that Saigyō met important figures in the political world. For instance, it is believed that by 1153 Saigyō had visited Taira Tadamori at his mansion. This astute warrior and politician gained wide control of the provinces as well as strong influence in the court which later provided the basis for his son, Kiyomori's becoming supreme in Japan. Saigyō was impressed by the Taira family and his poems indicate a favorable attitude toward the way of life created by them.

In 1155 and 1156 there were two deaths in the Imperial family. The young emperor Konoe died in 1155. Saigyō visited his tomb in the same year as his death. On the second day of the seventh month of 1156, the ex-emperor Toba finally succumbed. On the evening when the ex-emperor's body was removed to the Hongyo tower or Anraku-ji, Saigyō came down from Mt. Kōya to attend the services and to chant sutras throughout the night.
After the death of his father Toba, the ex-emperor Sutoku with the encouragement of Fujiwara Norinaga, decided to re-ascent the throne. The reigning emperor and favorite son of Toba, Go Shirakawa (r. 1155-1158), opposed the move. The brief battle between these two factions at the Shirakawa palace where Sutoku's forces were encamped is known as the Hōgen Insurrection. Sutoku, whose forces were defeated, was exiled to Sanuki province on Shikoku Island. Before his departure, on the twelfth day of the seventh month, Sutoku received the tonsure at the Kita-in of the Ninna-ji. On that moonlight night Saigyō hurried to the temple to express his sympathy for him. After this meeting, Saigyō and Sutoku sent poems to each other on three occasions before the ex-emperor died in exile in Sanuki.

Saigyō's life was much affected by the tragedy of Emperor Sutoku, his friend and fellow poet. His relationship with Sutoku was Saigyō's main connection with the secular world. It is noted that after the emperor's death Saigyō wrote more of nature and less of secular concerns than previously. The emperor's downfall after the Hōgen Insurrection and his death also brought about the decline of the Tokudaiji family. In 1157 Tokudaiji Saneyoshi and his wife

22 Fujioka, pp. 515-516.
died. Saigyō came down from the temple on Mt. Kōya to visit their son, Kinyoshi, in order to express his condolences and to urge him to enter the priesthood.

The incidents which are recorded in documents concerning the next six years of Saigyō's life are all connected with people and events in the capital. In 1158 Saigyō composed poems on the behalf of one of Taiken-mon-in's former ladies-in-waiting, lady Kaga of Ōmiya at Shioyu. And on the snowy fourth day of the twelfth month, he attended the ritual for receiving the ashes of Bifuku-mon-in, the wife of emperor Toba and the mother of emperor Konoe.

By 1159 Saigyō had attended the mushiawase or insect-gathering competition held at the castle of Hachijō, a prince in the court of emperor Nijō (r. 1158-1165). During 1160 Saigyō again enjoyed the gaiety of court circles when he composed nine poems under a name other than his own (because of his insufficiently high rank) at the emperor Nijō's kaiawase or sea-shell gathering competition.

In 1164, when he was forty-seven, Saigyō exchanged poems with Jakuren of Ōhara lamenting the decline of the world of poetry in the capital following the death of Sutoku. Jakuzen, who had visited the exiled Sutoku in Sanuki, seems to have influenced Saigyō, for it is at about this time that Saigyō began to think about visiting Shikoku Island on which
Sanuki is located.

In the ninth month of 1165, Saigyō attended a memorial service at the imperial tomb on the fiftieth day after the death of emperor Nijō. On the night of the thirteenth of that month, he presented poems to the Mikawa warriors who had been in the service of the late emperor.

During 1166 and 1167 Saigyō's public activities as a poet were extensive. For example, in 1166, after the death of another of Taiken-mon-in's former ladies-in-waiting, In-no-Niï, Saigyō exchanged ten poems of deep lamentations with her daughter, In Shōnagon. He exchanged poems as well with others who had known her. Frequently during this year, Saigyō participated in utaawase or poetry competitions held in Tokiwa. These competitions took place in the mansion of Fujiwara Tamenari, who later as a priest took the name Jakunen (one of the Sanjaku). In this year Saigyō also began to exchange poems with Fujiwara Shunzei's cousin, Koretaka. In 1167 Saigyō attended an utaawase at Shunzei's mansion.

In order to assure the success of his trip to Shikoku Island, on the tenth day of the tenth month of 1168, the fifty year old Saigyō visited the Tanao Shrine of the Kamo Shrines in Kyoto. He then proceeded to Shikoku through Kojima, Hibi, and Shibu-kaï in the province of Bizen. After crossing the Inland Sea and arriving at Matsuyama Bay in Sanuki, Saigyō
went to visit Sutoku's White Peak Imperial Tomb. He next viewed the remains of a retreat of Kūbō Daishi, or Kūkai, who in the beginning of the ninth century founded the Shingon sect at Mt. Kōya. Saigyō built a hut there and remained until after the New Year. On his return he boarded a boat on the Mino coast of Sanuki province and travelled back to Manabe and Shioaku Islands. Plans which he had apparently made to visit Tosa province on Shikoku and Kyushu did not materialize.

Saigyō again produced a large number of poems inspired by his travels. And at about the same time he composed the Koi Hyakujushu or One Hundred and Ten Love Poems, and exchanged poems with In Shōnagon. Returning from a trip for the performance of religious austerities, Saigyō made a pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi Shrine on the second day of the sixth month of 1171, the day after the ex-emperor Go-Shirakawa had visited the shrine.

During the same year Saigyō exchanged poems with a court lady, Senshi, lamenting the state of neglect into which Sai-in had fallen since its desertion in the eighth month. The general decline of the capital area is reflected by the fact that this and other buildings which Saigyō admired were permitted to fall in ruins. A few years later, Saigyō undertook the direction of the reconstruction of this temple, a process
which will be discussed below.

On the eighteenth of the third month of 1172, Taira Kiyomori, now at the height of his power in the capital, invited Saigyō to his Myriad Lights Gathering on the Beach of Wada in the province of Settsu. Eight years later Kiyomori would move the court to the Beach of Wada to escape the oncoming Minamoto.

The poet Saijū died in 1173, and Jakuzen and Saigyō exchanged poems about his dying moments and the depositing of his ashes. During the next year, Saigyō began to exchange poems with the poet-priest Jien of Mudō-ji on Mt. Hiei. It also appears that in this year Saigyō was involved in communications about poetry with Taira Tokitada, the brother-in-law of Kiyomori. Saigyō and Tokitada exchanged poems from 1169 to 1176.

During 1177, Saigyō was busy with activities relating to the temple of Mt. Kōya. On the fifteenth day of the third month, Saigyō sent a letter from the capital to Mt. Kōya, reporting on the progress of the petitioning of Kiyomori to exempt the priests of Mt. Kōya from conscription into a labor force constructing the shrine of Nichizen Jinhū in Kishu. Later Saigyō devoted himself to directing the construction of Rengeijō-in of Sai-in, which was completed on the ninth day of the eleventh month of 1177. Although he was busy with
temple duties, Saigyō found time during this same year to select poems to send to Shunzei, who was compiling the Damon collection.

Scholars agree that the poems which were included in the Popular Edition of the *San'kasū* were compiled during 1178, before Saigyō's move to Ise province. In 1179 Saigyō exchanged poems with Miya no Hōin, a son of Sutoku, who had become a priest on Mt. Kōya. Later Saigyō held an *utaawase* with Jakuzen and others in Miyo no Hōin's cell in Kōya-ji.

In the year 1180 with the occurrence of the Gempei War between the Taira and the Minamoto, Saigyō left Mt. Kōya and moved to Futami no Yamadera Temple in the province of Ise. After hearing of the transfer of the capital by Taira Kiyomori to Fukuwara in Settsu province on the second day of the sixth month, Saigyō was inspired to write several poems relating to this event. He also contributed to a hundred-poem sequence in which the poet-priest Jakuren, the cousin of Shunzei, urged him to participate. In the following year Saigyō engaged in correspondence concerning an imperial anthrology with the ex-emperor Takakura (r. 1168-1180). Saigyō composed a series of *renge* with one of Taiken-mon-in's former ladies in waiting, Hyō-e, just before her death in

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23 See poem 89 for a reference to this event.
the capital in 1182.

Besides his correspondence with people in the capital, Saigyō was also involved in poetry competition outside Kyoto. In 1182 the Hana no uta jūshū or Ten Blossom Poems was composed at an utaawase which was attended by Saigyō and the priests of the Ise Shrines. In 1182 at the Isuzu River Saigyō met Minamoto Michichika, who was on a mission in connection with his recent appointment as an imperial envoy, and who acted as liaison between the Kamakura military government and the court in Kyoto. Michichika's appointment is an indication of the rising influence of the Minamoto following the Taira retreat to the west.

The events of the Gempei War provided subject matter for many of Saigyō's poems during this time. Saigyō was moved to compose poems about the death in 1184 of the Minamoto general, Yoshinaka. Yoshinaka, betrayed by Minamoto Yukiie, tried to ally himself with the Taira, only to be slain by the Minamoto forces. Saigyō also wrote poems about a military raft used to cross the Uji river during the battle of Byōdō-in. In 1185 he composed poems upon being informed of the death of the Taira generals, Munemori and Kiyomune, after the decisive defeat of their clan at the battle of Dan no Ura. But perhaps the most profound feelings which the Gempei war evoked in Saigyō were those recorded in a series of poems,
"Written upon viewing a Hell Screen," in which he pessimistically describes the prospects of man's achieving salvation.

In the same year as the battle of Dan no ura brought an end to the civil war (1185), Saigyō delivered a series of lectures on poetry composition to the priests of the Ise shrines. These lectures were later compiled into the Saigyō shonin danshō or A Selection of Priest Saigyo's Lectures by a priest, Mitsuyoshi, who had become Saigyō's disciple. Saigyō also exchanged poems with the high priest Ujiyoshi, the brother of Mitsuyoshi, at Ise. Saigyō's relationship with this Shinto center was more than poetic. The twelfth century saw the development of Ryōbu Shinto or Dual Shinto, an attempt to unite Shinto and Buddhism, particularly encouraged by Saigyō's Shingon sect. Several of Saigyō's poems deal with this blending of beliefs.

Just before his second trip to Mutsu province, Saigyō called together several poets on the Bay of Futami to compose poems. And he also sent a sprig of hemayu, a plant for which Ise province was famous, and some tiny shells, as a touching remembrance to his friend Shunzen.

24See poem 80.
25See poem 92 and the accompanying footnote.
At the request of Tōdai-ji in Nara, Saigyo once again undertook the strenuous trip to Miraizumi in distant Mutsu province to search for alluvial gold in the north. In 1186 Saigyo, who was then sixty-eight years old, wrote farewell poems to the high priest of Jingū-ji and composed poems of farewell at an utaawase with the priests of Ise.

During this trip to Mutsu Saigyo wrote some of his most famous and moving poems. The experience of climbing up the steep pass at Sayo no Nakayama as he had done almost forty years before, was exhilarating and became the basis of one of his most famous poems. 26 The wavering smoke rising from Mt. Fuji which he passed on his way inspired him to write a poem. 27

While on this trip Saigyo once again met the leading political figure of the day. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month Saigyo arrived in Kamakura and visited the leader of the military government, Minamoto Yoritomo. This incident is discussed in almost all histories of Japan. Yoritomo asked Saigyo to lecture on poetry and military arts. A typical account of this encounter is as follows: Yoritomo "... was so struck by his venerable appearance that he

26 See poem 37.

27 See poem 64.
invited him to his mansion and would have had him remain there permanently. But Saigyō declined. On parting, the Minamoto chief gave him as a souvenir, a cat chiselled in silver, which the old ascetic held in such light esteem that he bestowed it on the first child he met. Saigyō wrote poems at the Furukawa ferry crossing in Kozuke province before he arrived in Hiraizumi in Matsu. Immediately after his arrival he went to Chūson-ji where he met wandering priests from Nara, and wrote poems with them about their far-off home.

In the spring of the next year, 1187, having achieved the purpose of his trip, Saigyō returned from Matsu. He then compiled his Mimosusogawa utaawase, a jikaawase or personal poetry competition, in which he selected the topic for which he composed corresponding poems. With an appropriate exchange of poems, Saigyō asked Shunzei to criticize his efforts. Shunzei's criticism of the Mimosusogawa utaawase which was completed by the end of the year, has become an important document in the study of the literary criticism of the twelfth century. In the same year Saigyō set about compiling another jikaawase, the Miyakawa utaawase. Upon its completion he asked Shunzei's son, Teika, to make comments

28Brinkley, p. 387.

about this work. Teika spent two years preparing his criticisms for Saigyō.

The Senzaishū, the seventh imperial anthology compiled by Shunzei, was completed in 1188 and included eighteen of Saigyō's poems. While this event marked the supremacy of Shunzei in the poetry world, it was also the first important public recognition of Saigyō's poetry by the aristocratic poetry circles in Kyoto. Saigyō went on to compose the Tawabure uta or Poems in Jest during the same year. He spent this summer in the Saga district in the capital.

Saigyō received Teika's criticisms on the Miyakawa utaawase in 1189 at Kōsen-ji in the province of Kawachi where he was staying during an illness. Saigyō sent a letter back to Teika expressing his delight at receiving Teika's comments, along with some of his own opinions about his works. In 1189 Saigyō completed the final edition of both the Mimosusogawa utaawase and the Miyakawa utaawase as well as the selection for the Ihon sankashū and Sankashinjushū. He had planned to take his works to the capital this year but was prevented by his sickness. In 1190 on the sixteenth day of the second month Saigyō died in Kōsen-ji at the age of 72. Shunzei, Teika, Jien, and Jakuren expressed their sorrow in poems.

The life of Saigyō is symbolic of the transitions
which occurred in late Heian society. He was of a military family (as were those who came to dominate Japan during the twelfth century) and critical of the aristocratic way of life, but at the same time he had close connections with the aristocracy as well as with the two emperors, Toba and Sutoku. While he displayed virtuosity of public, formal poetry competitions, Saigyo primarily sought inspiration for his poetry and his way of life outside the capital-centered aristocratic society, and within the seclusion of nature. Although he was critical of the artificiality characteristic of aristocratic poetry, Saigyo longed for recognition in the traditional poetry world; that is, by being published in an imperial anthology.

Thus, for a balanced view of Saigyo as an individual in the late Heian period, his involvement both with the declining aristocratic order and with the forces of change must be fully considered. There has been and still is, however, a strong impulse to identify Saigyo totally with the new order since his life and poetry suggest so much of the new expressions of the coming medieval age, a period which began in the twelfth century and extended into the sixteenth century.

Heralding the beginning of this age is the fading image of the refined Heian courtier, with his ready repartee in conversation and in poetry exchanges, concomitant with a
focusing on the reflective priest living in seclusion as an ideal. While Saigyō demonstrates in his poetry exchanges that he was far from incompetent in the art of the deft reply, the picture of him as the hermit priest is certainly more familiar.

The journeys of Saigyō, as a poet-priest, relate to several features of Japanese poetry, and Japanese literature in general, which became increasingly prevalent during this time. They indicate that the capital was no longer the sole source of inspiration and culture. Places outside the capital became the locations of fictional and poetic episodes, and an elaborate development in the use of place names in literature occurred. The Buddhist temple became the store-house of culture. Poetry and fiction which spread geographically became predominantly concerned with personal, introspective themes, revealing a new philosophical depth. This depth is primarily ascribed to a widespread acceptance of the pessimistic aspects of Buddhist thought which suited the times. The most characteristic pose taken by authors during this medieval period was that of a priest surrounded by nature. Nature, not as it appeared in cultivated gardens, but in the wilds, became one of the main sources of inspiration in the literature of the period.

The Shinkokinshū, which is recognized as the most
elegant expression of the era, contains more of Saigyou's poems than those of any other poet. Poems about unrequited love, meditative autumn poems, poems tinged with Buddhist pessimism are those which most exemplify this anthology as they do Saigyou's works. Saigyou's posture in his poetry as one who "has abandoned the world" was common to the literature of the period. Two of the most outstanding authors of the medieval age wrote along these lines. Kamo no Chomei (1153-1215) told about his experiences in this trying world before and after his renunciation of the world in Hogi, or Account of the Ten Foot Square Hut.30 Yoshida Kenko (1282-1350) in his Tsurezure-gusa, or Essays in Idleness31 viewed the world from the point of view of an unattached priest. Saigyou's seeking inspiration from the direct confrontation with nature brings to mind the outstanding renga poet, Sogi, (1421-1502) who gathered poets in rustic surroundings to compose renga. It also recalls the haiku master Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) who, although he lived after this medieval period, visited places Saigyou mentioned in his poems and cultivated the style of poetry which Saigyou had perfected.

30Translated in Donald Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century (New York, 1960), pp. 197-212.
The Poetry of Saigyō

Saigyō's poetry is written in a form known as waka, or Japanese verse, and alternatively as tanka or short verse. Aside from the renga, which is essentially a series of waka linked together, no other form was utilized by Japanese poets of the period. The waka is an extremely demanding form resulting from its brevity and traditionally limited vocabulary. The waka consists of only thirty-one syllables divided into five syllabic units of 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. The vocabulary employed within the waka is basically derived from the 2,000 words originally used in the first imperial anthology, the Kokinshū. Not only are these words limited in number but in

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32 Saigyō wrote 2086 waka and 10 renga which are extant.

33 The chōka or long verse was no longer practiced and the haiku was of later development. Poets did compose in Chinese, but this belongs to another tradition.

34 It should be understood that these syllabic units are not equivalent to a meaningful line of poetry. Frequently waka are written in one line so that the syllabic divisions become apparent only when read aloud. While in romanizing waka the practice is to make these divisions clear, in translating one need not produce five lines of poetry. See Hirano Umeyo, "On Translating Japanese Tanka Poems," Studies in the Humanities: The Journal of the Literary Association of Osaka City University, vol. i, February 1951.
character as well. The diction of the waka preserves so-called pure Japanese or Yamato kotoba which contains no abstract or loan words of Chinese origin. A further limitation presented to the waka poet is that subjects and method of treatment are small in range and dictated by tradition. Subjects are usually restricted to love and nature, and expressed in tones of gentle melancholy. Moreover, waka were characteristically composed to suit an occasion. In the twelfth century, it was common to have topics imposed on the poets by official judges at utaawase, formal, public poetry competitions, and by the poet himself when writing poems in sequence based on utaawase models.

Saigyō transcends the impositions inherent in the waka by poetic mastery. At times, however, he strains the rigorously traditional concept of the form by employing a broader range of vocabulary and treatment of subjects than some scholarly and aristocratic poets at the time thought proper. His occasional use of a contemporary colloquialism was chided, and his philosophical depth seemed jarring in terms of the usual decorous and superficial religious feelings expressed

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35 Abstract Chinese words are similar to Latinisms in English. In general, Latinisms have been avoided in the translations in this essay.

36 Saigyō's Mimosusogawa utaawase and Miyakawa utaawase are two examples of this type of composition.
in waka. In spite of such infractions, Saigyō's understanding and utilization of the waka far surpassed that of stricter and more conventional poets.

Some of Saigyō's greatest poems are to be found among the ninety-four included in the Shinkokinshū, the eighth imperial anthology. The Shinkokinshū is one of the crowning examples of Japanese poetry. Unlike most imperial anthologies, its compilation was undertaken by a select committee consisting of the finest poets of the period--Fujiwara Teika, Fujiwara Ariie, Fujiwara Ietaka, the priest Jakuren, Minamoto Michitomo, and Asukai Masatsune. The entire project was closely supervised by one of Japan's most poetically gifted emperors, Go-Toba, who ordered the compilation of the Shinkokinshū in 1201. Its name, Shinkokinshū, or New Collection of Ancient and Contemporary Times, and its attempt to mingle contemporary and ancient poems, suggest that the editors of the eighth imperial anthology endeavored to emulate and perhaps even improve on the formidable first imperial anthology, Kokinshū, or Collection of Ancient and Contemporary Times whose very greatness had impeded poetic innovation and growth for centuries. In the opinion of many Japanese, the Shinkokinshū succeeded in the attempt. 37

37 One of the Shinkokinshū's unique features, which Japanese scholars have recently rediscovered, is that the poems
Saigyō's ninety-four poems in the Shinkokinshū have been selected for translation in this essay because they include some of his best waka, and suggest the wide range of poetic approach, and theme, which characterize Saigyō's poetry. Not all of these poems, however, are suited to literary translation. The poems which are most readily adaptable to and effective in literary translation are those with an abundance of natural imagery. Poems written for specific social occasion, such as a death in a family, poems with extensive use of word-play inherent in the Japanese language, and purely abstract poems with no concrete images present the most difficulties. These are therefore usually the least successful in translation. It is obvious, however, that what is basic to any sympathetic translation is an understanding and appreciation of the nature of the original literary form and the ideas that are expressed within it.

Certain early translators of Japanese verse had neither. For instance, MacCouley asserted that "... poetry is not, in throughout the collection are compiled in sequence by techniques of association and progression. In fact this anthology can be read from beginning to end as a single long structure divided into books. See Konishi Jin-ishi, trans. by Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner, "Association and Progression: Principles of Integration in Anthologies and Sequences of Japanese Court Poetry A.D. 900-1350," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, vol. 21, 1958, pp. 67-127.
Japan, a means chosen for sounding and recording the depths of profound spiritual experiences" and that ". . . it is given over to small fancies wrought under the lyric impulse."\(^{38}\)

Aston thought that "a feature which strikingly distinguishes the Japanese poetic muse from that of Western nations is a certain lack of imaginative power."\(^{39}\) Their translations reflect their inability to perceive the poetry in Japanese verse. "The fault was in their method; they trusted in mere form. They thought if the form of syllabic phrase were transplanted from one language into another, poetry would necessarily be carried with it."\(^{40}\) A far more reliable western pioneer in Japanese literature was Arthur Waley. His approach to the translation of Japanese and Chinese poetry was altogether different. In his introduction to *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* he tells us "Above all, considering imagery to be the soul of poetry, I have avoided either adding images of my own or suppressing those of the original."

Waley also found the use of rhyme ". . . injured either the vigour of one's language or the literalness of one's version."\(^{41}\)

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\(^{38}\) Quoted in Taketomo Torao, *The "Tanka" in English Translation with Fifty Poems from the Man’yoshu*, in Kwansei Gakuin University Publication in the Cultural Sciences, No. 1, January 1942, p. 5.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 5.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 6.

In the spirit of Waley's advice, the translations in this essay are offered as literary translations in free verse, in which the attempt has been made to express as much of the texture of the original poetics as possible. By way of introduction to the translations of the poems of Saigyō, the following detailed examination of a few representative poems is given to suggest the poet's mastery as well as to illustrate some of the difficulties of translating waka.

Saigyō's poetry shows him to be an expert in descriptive symbolism, a style of composition which had slowly developed during the twelfth century. The following poem written "On feelings expressed on the winter moon after a rain" suggests his facility in this style.

Ogura yama
Fumoto no sato ni
Ki no ha chireba
Kozue ni haruru
Tsuki wo miru kana

Since the leaves of the trees
Have fallen in a village
At the foot of Ogura mountain
Through the bare treetops
I see the clear moon

The concrete images in this poem along with its subject vividly portray a clear, wintry night which seems to refresh the viewer. Beneath this sensuous picture lie certain philosophical implications which are evoked by the elastic nature of the imagistic language. "'Natural imagery' is perhaps the best term for this metaphorical language, since the poets write from observation of nature and in a centuries-old poetic
and religious tradition of mingled animism, Buddhism, and Taoism."42 From the mention of the place name, Ogura mountain, and of the clear moon, it is likely that this poem refers to Buddhist enlightenment. Ogura mountain, just west of Kyoto, was a center for training priests. Saigyō himself spent time there as a neophyte priest. While it has a variety of connotations, the moon, Saigyō's favorite image, is frequently employed as a symbol of Buddhist knowledge and enlightenment. Thus, while the images in this poem set a striking tableau and mood, they are to be understood within the context of Buddhist experience. By the very nature of this idiom, it is impossible to give a precise or authoritative interpretation of this poem. Several explanations could be suggested, however. For example, a clear, wintry night may be a symbolic representation of the way one feels upon experiencing a Buddhist awakening. Or it could mean that in winter when existence is in its barest form, the cycle of life becomes most poignantly clear, so that through the perception of the dreariness of life (through the bare trees) one understands the ultimate profundities of Buddhist wisdom (sees the moon).

This poem has many possible meanings and each time it is reread new interpretations come to mind. The poem thus illustrates Saigyō's skill in employing the yūgen (mystery and depth) style which Shunzei promulgated. The yūgen style is perhaps most eloquently advocated and described by Kamo no Chōmei in his Mumyōshō.43

It is only when many meanings are compressed into a single word, when the depths of feeling are exhausted yet not expressed, when an unseen world hovers in an atmosphere of the poem, when the mean and common are used to express the elegant, when a poetic conception of rare beauty is developed to the fullest extent in a style of surface simplicity—only then, when the conception is exalted to the highest degree and the words are too few,'44 will the poem, by expressing one's feelings in this way have the power of moving Heaven and Earth within the brief confines of a mere thirty-one syllables, and be capable of softening the hearts of gods and demons.45

Saigyō can also approach a poem in a totally different manner; that is, by direct, declarative statement. Instead of relying on imagery, this style of composition calls for the subtle and concise wording of the statement. At

43From a portion translated in Brower and Miner, p. 264.

44Originally an adverse criticism made by Ki no Tsurayuki of Ariwara Narihira's poetry.

45These are among the feats which Ki no Tsurayuki, in his Preface to The Kokinshū, claimed Japanese poetry could accomplish at its best.
times this appears contrived, but poems in this style can be effective verse as the following poem concerning the aftermath of an affair suggests.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Utokumaru} & \quad \text{Why must I resent her} \\
\text{Hito wo nani to te} & \quad \text{Now that she has grown distant} \\
\text{Uramuran} & \quad \text{Since there was a time when} \\
\text{Shirarezu shiranu} & \quad \text{Unknown myself, I knew her not?} \\
\text{Ori mo arishi ni} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

The use of the passive and active negative of the verb, shiru, "to know," provides particular poetic interest. Japanese critics suggest that the reason Saigyo composed this poem, shortly after he became a priest, was to use a kind of poetic logic to free himself from his attachments in the secular world. It should be pointed out that this is a poem which might salve the wounds of any unhappy lover.

By combining both direct statement and vivid imagery Saigyo achieved some of his greatest poetry.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kokoro naki} & \quad \text{Even to a person} \\
\text{Mi ni mo aware wo} & \quad \text{Without emotion} \\
\text{Shirarekeri} & \quad \text{This sadness would be known--} \\
\text{Shigi tatsu sawa no} & \quad \text{A snipe starts in a marsh} \\
\text{Aki no yûgure} & \quad \text{On an evening in autumn} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The contrast between the first three lines and the last two is striking indeed. Beside the disparity in poetic modes the syntactical break is emphasized by the use of the conclusive ending, keri, in the verb of the third line. The first part of the poem is a direct, declarative statement;
the second a vivid picture of a natural scene expressed in concrete images. The relationship is certainly irrational but, in the words of one critic, "What we have is a kind of descriptive symbolism with the signification of the symbols hinted at by a more discursive passage before the images. The two parts of the poem are truly 'distant' from each other, but have been integrated."46

Besides this contrast of abstract statement and imagery, for full appreciation certain expressions per se should be noted. "Even to a person without emotion" (kokoro naki minimo) most likely refers to a priest whose goal is to rid himself of emotional involvement with life. The poem is effective as a general statement, but the theme of this poem is surely one of Saigyō's favorite—the conflict between religious ideals and human feelings. This theme became much more common in medieval literature. The poet's deep esthetic sensitivity to the world around him keeps him attached to it. The emotion he experiences in this poem is described in Japanese as aware, an expression which has a wide variety of meanings. It has been translated as "sadness" but its various meanings include pathetic, moving, beautiful, and it is similar to lacrimae rerum or the pity of things.47 Aware

46Konishi, p. 121.
takes on an especially melancholy tone in this poem because of the mention of "evening in autumn" (aki no yūgure). Evening in autumn provides the background of many of the poems in the Shinkokinshū and evokes the lonely feeling of the twilight medieval world. That a snipe flying away from a marsh should call forth feelings of aware is irrational but somehow, within the context of this tightly constructed poem, compellingly real.

Saigyō's poems are not always concerned with such intense esthetic experiences. In fact they can be light and humorous.

Oyamada no
Io chikaku naku
Shika no ne ni
Odorokasarete
Odorokasu kana

By the sound of deer crying
Near my hut
In a small mountain field
Startled awake,
I startled them

The poem suggests a scene in which Saigyō is awakened in his hut by the deer outside; disgruntled, he chases them away. The use of the causative-passive and causative-active of the verb odoroku, "to surprise or startle," demonstrates an effective utilization of the medium.

Saigyō's travels provided inspiration for many of his poems. In them one frequently finds the mention of place names. This practice of recording place names is seen in the earliest Japanese poetry. It became, however, increasingly
common in the twelfth and succeeding centuries as poets began
to wander throughout the country. The resulting familiarity
with these place names on the part of poetry readers enabled
the poet to invoke the spirit of a place by merely mention-
ing its name. For instance, the appearance of the Yoshino
hills in a poem immediately brings forth visions of cherry
blossoms because it was a spot well known for cherry blossom
viewing. And Mt. Fuji's majestic beauty and connections with
Shinto mythology inspired awe in poetry readers. One of
Saigyō's most famous poems was composed when he was travel-
ing in Tohoku or the eastern region of Japan on his way to
Mutsu province.

Toshi takete
Mata koyubeshi to
Omoiki ya
Inochi narikeri
Sayo no Nakayama

Did I think I would
Pass this way again
When I was old?
What a long life I have lived--
Nakayama of the Night

In order for the reader to be fully responsive to this poem
it is necessary to know that Nakayama of the Night is a
steep mountain pass which was frequently mentioned in classi-
cal poetry. Nakayama which means "In the mountains" is a
common place name. It was customary to further define such
places with a descriptive term like Night. When one envisions
an old man trudging up this pass as he had done many
years before it is understandable that his past life would have
appeared before his eyes.
An even more subtle use of a place name is illustrated in the following poem by the employment of *engo* or association words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suzuka yama</th>
<th>Across Suzuka mountain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukiyo wo yoso ni</td>
<td>And shaking off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furisutete</td>
<td>The floating world for another place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika ni nariyuki</td>
<td>What will become of me now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waga mi naruran</td>
<td>As I go ringing a bell?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suzuka mountain is a pass between the Kyoto region and Ise province. Suzuka is also a part of a series of *engo*, association words, which have been described as "... words rising from the same concept, occupying a position somewhere between our similes and metaphors and the products of free association in modern verse."\(^{48}\) Suzuka literally means Bell Deer. The Bell of this name is related to the verbs *furisutete* and *nariyuki*. *Furisutete* means "to shake off" or "to abandon," and in this context leaving the secular world (the floating world) to become a priest. *Furi*, however, is the verb commonly connected with the action of shaking a bell. *Nariyuki*, "to become of a person," contains the verb *nari*, "to ring [a bell]." Thus embedded in the rich texture of this poem is the concept of "bell shakes and rings." This action refers to the fact that a Buddhist pilgrim rings a

bell as he travels. While this is expressed in the original with such a subtle use of engo, in translation it is necessary to make this meaning explicit. At the same time, however, it is important to preserve the place name Suzuka in Japanese, because its translated equivalent would seem odd and would not produce the usual associations connected with this pass. The pass leads out of the capital area into a more uncivilized region in Ise. Therefore in translation Suzuka is left in Japanese. To make explicit what the engo suggest, the phrase "ringing a bell" has been added. To see the poem as a whole, then, it concerns a young priest's thoughts as he goes on a pilgrimage, leaving the familiar capital and entering into a unknown region. The situation reflects his own wonderment about what his life as a priest will bring for him.

Love, and particularly unrequited love, provides the topic of several of Saigyō's most eloquent poems. The following poem employs another technique of word play called kakekotoba.

Omoishiru
Hito ariake no
Yo nariseba
Tsukisezu mi wo ba
Uramizaramashi

If there were someone
In this world who understood me
Now in the dawning
I should not feel such endless grief
At the moon lingering in the sky.
The densely structured surface of this poem, achieved by the use of three *kakekotoba* and other evocative words, greatly ramify the implications of the poem. It is impossible to give a literal translation of the poem. Rendering it into poetic English involves extensive rearrangement of syntax as well as expansion of some portions of the poem and compression of others.

The setting of the poem is the time of *ariake*. While this term has been translated as "dawning," it refers to a more specific time than is normally recognized in English. *Ariake* is that poetic time of day when, while the sun is just rising, the moon still lingers in the sky. It was a time when court lovers had to part in order to avoid committing the indiscretion of being observed. It was also the time when, separated, they began to muse about their night together. By the mention of *ariake* in this poem, Saigyō evokes this traditional connotation, contrasting it with his reactions to this time of day, which excites his empty longings.

While the mention of *ariake* suggests these rich associations, it also acts as a *kakekotoba*, a pivot-word or sometimes just a pun. The technique of the *kakekotoba* "... is to employ a single word in a pivotal position between two clauses, in such a way that it is construed in two different
senses: the pivot-word thus acts as a two-way hinge, shifting in sense, and by this shift, linking two images. . . . This technique was facilitated, of course, by the paucity of sounds in Japanese and the consequent variety of homonyms.49 Thus, while ariake first of all has its usual meaning, in this poem is also contains the meaning ari, "to be," the verb to which the subject omoishitu hito, "someone who understands me," is attached.

The next kakekotoba is "yo," a homonym for both world and night. This kakekotoba, however, is not used as a pivot between two clauses and functions more as a simple pun. "Night/world" seems to refer both to the world of lovers and to the poet's gloomy state of mind. This pun on "yo" was commonplace in classical poetry and does not particularly add new dimension to the poem. "Night" serves merely to emphasize the overall meaning of the poem and the deletion of this word in translation does not mean its implications cannot be suggested in other parts of the translation.

The final kakekotoba in this poem is tsukisezu. Tsukisezu is the negative form of the verb tsukiru, "to end," and has been translated as an adjective "endless." The first part of the word, tsuki, means moon and refers to the moon.

This poem clearly illustrates Saigyō's virtuosity in implementing conventional techniques of word-play and words with connotations established within the poetic tradition to achieve original treatment and unexpected meanings. This is indeed characteristic of all of his great poems. In this respect it can be said of Saigyō that his poetry embraces the wide scope of the Japanese poetry tradition. He utilized a centuries-old idiom to create an individual and fresh poetic expression, reflecting his understanding of the merits and limitations of the old modes and the need for new ones. From the lives of men like Saigyō who comprehend their changing worlds, there emanates the spirit of modernity, however unlike the conditions of their times are to the present. And when such a man is a master poet, his poetry communicates to any age.

which lingers in the sky at ariake.
A Translation of Saigyō's poems in the Shinkokinshū

Spring Poems

1 (7) Topic unknown

Iwama tojishi
Kōri mo kesa wa
Tokesomate
Koke no shita mizu
Michi no tomuran

Even the ice shut
In the clefts of the rocks
This morning began to melt;
It must be seeking
A waterpath beneath the moss

2 (27) Written as a spring poem

Furitsumishī
Takane no mi yuki
Tokenikeri
Kiyotakigawa no
Mizu no shiranami

Snow piled up
On the high peaks
Has melted—
In the River Kiyotaki
White waves on pure waters

---

1Spring Poems is the title of the first book of the Shinkokinshū. Titles are given for each of the books.

2This number refers to the number of this poem in the Shinkokinshū.

3Topics for each poem in translation are given as they appear in the Shinkokinshū. In the case of this poem the topic is given as unknown.

4River Kiyotaki--this river, after flowing through the mountainous area north of Kyoto, passes into the city. Kiyotakigawa means "River of Pure Waterfalls," suggesting the transparency of the water and the fact it splashes down from the mountains.
3 (51) Topic unknown

Tomekokashi
Ume sakari naru
Waga yado wo
Utoki mo hito wa
Ori ni koso yore

Come visit my house
Where now the plum blossoms
Are in bloom
My indifference
Depends on circumstance

4 (79) Topic unknown

Yoshino yama
Sakura ga eda ni
Yuki chirite
Hana osoge naru
Toshi ni mo aru kana

On the Yoshino hills
Snow falling
Upon the branches of cherry trees
It seems in this year
The cherry blossoms will be late

5 My indifference--Commentaries differ on whether Saigyō is referring to his own indifference or the negligence of someone else. The commentary in the Iwanami edition of the Shinkokinshū asserts that he normally does not want to be disturbed by people but the blossoms soften his heart. In his extensive Shinkokinshū hyōshaku Kubota Utsubo suggests, however, that the poem refers to the negligence of someone else. Kubota indicates that this poem was attached to a letter to a friend whom Saigyō is accusing of employing deference as an excuse for not visiting him. Kubota claims the poem was written therefore as a rebuke to this friend. Using this interpretation, the last two lines may be translated as "Your negligence should be saved! For some other occasion."

6 Yoshino hills--Southeast of present-day Osaka, Yoshino is associated with cherry blossom-viewing in classical poetry.

7 chirite--This verb is an enko used in relationship with both the falling of snow and the falling of cherry blossoms. Since the cherry tree flowers early in spring, there is often poetic admixture of the perception of white snow and the white blossoms in classical poetry.
5 (86) Written as a blossom poem

Yoshino yama
Kozo no shiori no
Michi kaete
Mada minu kata no
Hana wo tazunen

On the Yoshino hills
Changing my route marked with
Last year's broken branches
I will visit cherry blossoms
In a direction yet unseen

SUMMER POEMS

6 (126) Topic unknown

Nagumato te
Hana ni no itaku
Narenureba
Chiru wakare koso
Kanashikarikere

Brooding over them
I became so deeply attached
To the cherry blossoms
That their scattering, our
parting,
Deeply sadden my heart

7 (217) Topic unknown

Kikazu tomo
Koko wo se ni sen
Hototogisu
Yamada no hara no
Sugi no muradachi

Though I hear nothing,
Here I shall make my listening
place
For the hototogisu
Here, by the cedar groves
In the plain of Yamada

hototogisu --This bird, somewhat similar to a warbler, appears in the early summer so it is often used in classical poetry to herald the beginning of this season. The bird also is related to Buddhism since its name and its song resembles the phrase "Ho o kike," or "Listen to the Law of Buddha." Given Saigyō's Buddhist background and the subtle expansiveness of his style, most likely there is a Buddhist ripple of implication in this poem.

Yamada--This is a place in Ise province, home of the Ise shrine.
8 (218) Topic unknown

Ho**to**t**o**gisu       The hototogisu
Fukaki mine yori       Has emerged
Idenikeri               From the deep peaks
Toyama no suso ni       His song comes falling down
Koe no ochikuru        To the foot of the nearby hills

9 (262) Topic unknown

Michi no be ni          At the side of the road
Shimizu nagaruru       The willow's shade
Yanagi kage             Where clear water flows
Shibeshi to te koso    Thinking "Just for a while"
Tachidomaritsure       I stayed on

10 (263) Topic unknown

Yoraretsuru            The parched grasses
Nomose no kusa no       Choking the fields
Kageroite               Are shaded over
Suzushiku kumoru       Coolly clouded
Yūdachi no sora         Rain-threatening-sky

---

10 Deep peaks (fukaki mine) and nearby hills (toyama) - Topographically these terms are similar to mountains and foot hills and in early summer the warbler comes down from the mountains. The poetic implications of these terms are that they mark off a relative distance from civilization. The deep peaks are where a Buddhist priest like Saigyo would go to get away from society and to contemplate. Whether this poem is purely descriptive of nature or a subtle Buddhist poem by implication is not clear. However, the conception of "deep peaks," I believe, is peculiarly Japanese and an important image in Saigyo's poetry.
FALL POEMS

11 (299) Topic unknown

Oshinabete
Mono wo omawanu
Hito ni sae
Kokoro wo tsukuru
Aki no hatsukaze

Generally
Even for people
Who are unconcerned
There is the first-autumn-wind
Which matures one's heart

12 (300) Topic unknown

Aware ika ni
Kusaba no tsuyu no
Koboruran
Akikaze tachinu
Miyagino no hara

Just imagine how
The dew on those leaves of grass
Must be spilling over;
Here the autumn wind rises up
And I think of the wide fields of Miyagino.11

13 (362) Topic unknown

Kokoro naki
Ni ni mo aware wa
Shirarekeri
Shigi tatsu sawa no
Aki no yūgure

Even to a person
Without emotion12
This sadness would be known--
A snipe starts in a marsh
On an evening in autumn

11 Miyagino--In terms of contemporary geography, Miyagino is a field east of Sendai in Miyagi prefecture. This poem refers to one among the Eastern Poems (Azuma uta) in the Kokinshū by an unknown author: "Misaburai mikasa to mōse miyagino no ko no shita tsuyu wa ame ni masareri," which could be translated as, "Attendant, tell your master to take his rain hat. The dew falling from the trees at Miyagino is heavier than rain." Thus, since the autumn winds begin to blow in the capital Saigyo thinks of Miyagino in the north where now the dew must spill over as thick as rain.

12 Even to a person without emotion--Most likely this means a Buddhist priest as Saigyo was. However, as a more general statement it is also effective.
14 (367) Written as an autumn poem

| Obotsukana                           | It is unclear                           |
| Aki wa ika naru                      | If there is a reason why               |
| Yue no areba                         | In autumn                               |
| Suzuru ni mono no                   | Things are so irresistibly sad         |
| Kanashikaruramu                      |                                         |

15 (448) Topic unknown

| Oyamada no                           | By the sound of deer crying            |
| Io chikaku naku                      | Near my hut                             |
| Shika no ne ni                       | In a small mountain field              |
| Odorokasarete                        | Startled awake,                        |
| Odorokasu kana                       | I startled them                        |

16 (472) Topic unknown

| Kirigirisu                           | The cricket--                           |
| Yosamu ni aki no                     | In the night cold                      |
| Naru mama ni                         | As autumn draws on                     |
| Yowaru ka koe no                     | Does he weaken?                        |
| Tōzakari yuku                        | His voice grows ever more faint        |

17 (501) Topic unknown

| Yokogumo no                          | Flying over the mountains              |
| Kaze ni wakaruru                     | In the dawn sky                        |
| Shinonome ni                         | Where a bank of clouds                 |
| Yama tobikoyuru                      | Is blown apart by the wind--           |
| Hatsukari no koe                     | The cry of the first wild geese         |

18 (502) Topic unknown

| Shirakumo wo                         | Mingling their wings                   |
| Tsubasa ni kakete                    | With the white clouds                  |
| Yuku kari no                         | The departing geese                    |
| Kadota no omo no                     | Yearningly cry to their friends        |
| Tomo shitau naru                     | Upon the fields before the gate        |
19 (538) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matsu ni hau</th>
<th>Tsuki wo matsu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masa no hakazura</td>
<td>Takane no kumo wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chirinki</td>
<td>Harenkiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyama no aki ni</td>
<td>Kokoro arubeki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaze susamuran</td>
<td>Hatsushigure kana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WINTER POEMS

20 (570) Topic unknown

| The leaves of masa vines | I wait for the moon:       |
| Which creep within the pines | The clouds over the high peak |
| Have fallen;              | Have cleared;              |
| In the autumn of the nearby hills | The early winter drizzle |
| How wild the wind must be blowing | Must understand my feelings |

21 (585) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Akishino ya</th>
<th>Tsuki wo niru kana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toyama no sato ya</td>
<td>I see the clear moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shigururan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikoma no take ni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumo no kakereru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 (603) Feelings expressed on the winter moon after a rain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ogura yama</th>
<th>Since the leaves of the trees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fumoto no sato ni</td>
<td>Have fallen in a village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko no ha chireba</td>
<td>At the foot of Ogura mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozue ni haruru</td>
<td>Through the bare treetops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuki wo niru kana</td>
<td>I see the clear moon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

13 Peak of Ikoma--It is located between Nara and Osaka.

14 Ogura mountain--This mountain is near Kyoto and is the site of the Buddhist temple where Saigyō first received his priestly training. Thus, while the poem is descriptive of the natural surroundings, Ogura mountain and the moon, the symbol of Buddha and enlightenment, invoke a religious meaning.
23 (625) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tsu no kuni no</th>
<th>Spring at Naniwa[15]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naniwa no haru wa</td>
<td>In the province of Tsu--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yume nare ya</td>
<td>Was it a dream?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashi no kareba ni</td>
<td>The wind blows across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaze wataru nari</td>
<td>The reed's withered leaves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 (627) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabishisa ni</th>
<th>I wish there were someone else</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taetaru hito no</td>
<td>Who could bare this loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata mo are na</td>
<td>I would build my hut by his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iori naraben</td>
<td>In this wintry mountain village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuyu no yamazato</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25 (691) Sent to a person at the end of the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Onozukara</th>
<th>Though I have not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iwanu wo shitau</td>
<td>Invited anyone, I have wondered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hito ya aru to</td>
<td>Will anyone visit me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasurau hodo ni</td>
<td>And as I wait, uncertain,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshi no kurenuru</td>
<td>The year has reached its close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 (697) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mukashi omou</th>
<th>I think of the past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niwa ni ukigi wo</td>
<td>As I thoughtfully pile up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsumiokite</td>
<td>Driftwood[16] in the yard,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishi yo ni mo ninu</td>
<td>This year's end does not re-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshi no kure kana</td>
<td>semble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The world I used to know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[15]Naniwa--This town existed on the site of present-day Osaka.

[16]Driftwood--Driftwood is a Buddhist symbol representing Buddhist teachings, in particular those of the Lotus Sutra. This symbol originates from a tale concerning a turtle who had an eye only on his stomach. He was unable to see the moon and the sun, symbols of enlightenment and Buddhist teachings, until, clinging to a piece of driftwood...
POEMS OF GRIEF

27 (793) When I asked about the conspicuous tomb in the field though which I was passing on my way down to the province of Michi, they answered, "It is said it is the tomb of some lieutenant-general." And when I asked, "Who was the lieutenant-general?" they replied, "The court noble, Sanekata." In that winter scene, I dimly could see across the frosty pampas grass. Then I felt the melancholy of the scene and so I composed this poem.

Kuchi mo senu He has left behind
Sono na bakari wo Only his name
Todomekite That will never die
Kareno no susuki The pampas grass in the withered
Katami ni zo miru field Seems a keepsake of the man

In the water, he was overturned by a wave. In the same manner, when one clings to the Lotus sutra the way to enlightenment is opened. In Japan, the end of the year is a time of reminiscing about the past and of collecting firewood for the cold months ahead. In this poem, Saigyo compares his present life as a priest with his former secular life: in the past he gathered firewood worrying about the future cold, whereas now, with an ease of mind, he thoughtfully piles up (literally, "piles up for future use") Buddhist knowledge and practice for his eventual enlightenment and salvation.

17 The province of Michi--This is another name for Mutsu province.

18 Sanekata--He was a Fujiwara court poet who, upon having an argument with Fujiwara Kōzei at court, was exiled in 998 to Mutsu where he soon died.
28 (831) Intimations of transience

| Itsu nageki | Are men to spend their days, |
| Itsu omou beki | Not knowing when to lament, |
| Koto nareba | When to consider the future, |
| Ato no yo shirade | Ignorant of the world to come? |
| Hito no suguran |

29 (837) Sent to someone grieving over a death in the family

| Naki ato no | With only the remembrance |
| Omokage wo nomi | Of him who has departed |
| Mi ni soete | Left with you |
| Sa koso wa hito no | How you must long |
| Koishikarurame | For the man himself |

30 (838) Written because someone was angry that I had not paid a condolence call to him when he was grief stricken.

| Aware tomo | I could have visited you |
| Kokoro ni omou | If my feelings of grief |
| Hodo bakari | In my heart |
| Iwarenubeku wa | Were such |
| Toi koso wa seme | That they could be expressed |

SEPARATION POEMS

31 (885) Given as a parting present to someone going down to Michi province.

| Kimi inaba | When you have gone |
| Tsuki matsu to te mo | Even when I wait for the moon rise |
| Nagameyaran | I shall gaze far off |
| Azuma no kata no | Towards the evening sky |
| Yügure no sora | In the East |

While this poem on the surface has a sceptical tone, it is tinged with a feeling of deep personal lament and for that reason has been placed in the section on Poems of Grief.
32 (886) As I was leaving to perform ascetic practices at a distant place, people were sorry to see me go and I wrote this.

Tanomeokan
Kimi mo kokoro ya
Nagusamu to
Kaeran koto wa
Itsu to naku tomo

I'll promise to return
Knowing how much it will
Console your hearts,
Even though I cannot say
When I shall return

33 (887) Same as above

Saritomo to
Nao au koto wo
Tanomu kana
Shide no yamaji wo
Koenu wakare wa

Uncertain though it is,
I trust we shall meet again
For this is a parting
Which will not cross
The mountain road of death

TRAVEL POEMS

34 (937) Topic unknown

Miyako nite
Tsuki wo aware to
Omoishi wa
Kazu ni mo aranu
Susabi narikeri

To think I felt
The moon was moving
In the capital--
What a trifling pleasure
It now seems

35 (938) Topic unknown

Tsuki miba to
Chigiri okiteshi
Furusato no
Hito mo ya koyoi
Sode nurasuran

Will the girl in my village
Whom I promised
"When I gaze at the moon
I will remember"
Also moisten her sleeve tonight?
36 (978) When I visited the Tennoji temple\textsuperscript{20} suddenly it started to rain. I wanted to lodge at Eguchi\textsuperscript{21} but when I was refused I wrote this poem.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Yo no naka wo & To despise the world \noindent Itou made koso & Is indeed difficult \noindent Katakaram & But you are stingy\noindent Kari no yadori wo & Even with temporary lodgings \noindent Oshimu kimi kana & \\
\end{tabular}

---

37 (987) When travelling to the eastern provinces I composed this.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Toshi takete & Did I think I would \noindent Mata koyubeshi to & Pass this way again \noindent Omoiki ya & When I was old? \noindent Inochi narikeri & What a long life I have lived-- \noindent Sayo no Nakayama & Nakayama of the Night\textsuperscript{22} \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{20}Tennoji temple--This is a large Buddhist temple in Osaka founded by Shōtoku Taishi in the sixth century.

\textsuperscript{21}Eguchi--This was a port city on the Yodo River famous for its courtesans who provided entertainment for travelers. The situation from which this poem and a poem of a retort arose was recorded in the Senjūshū and the Sankashū and became the basis for the no play, Eguchi. Saigyo's poem was directed to a famous courtesan, the "Lady of Eguchi." Her reply, which is also recorded in the Shinkokinshū (no. 979), was "Yo wo itouhito to shi kikeba kari no yado ni kokoro tomu na to omou bakari zo." "Since I heard you were a person who despises the world I only thought 'Don't attach your heart to these temporary lodgings.'" "Temporary lodgings" is used ironically since it is a term Buddhists, those who "despise the world," employed to describe the transient world. For a discussion and translation of the play, Eguchi, see the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai's \textit{Japanese Noh Drama} and Noël Peri, \textit{Le no}.

\textsuperscript{22}Nakayama of the Night--This is a steep pass frequently mentioned in classical poetry. As was the custom with such common place names as Nakayama, it is further identified by the descriptive term "Night." While Nakayama of the Night was a boundary road of about four kilometers extending from Nissaka Pass on the old Tokaidō to Kaneya, it is
38 (988) Written as a travel poem

Omoioku
Hito no kokoro ni
Shitawarete
Tsuyu wakuru23 sode no
Kaerinuru24 kana

Those I loved and left behind
Are longed for by me,
Crossing through fields
My sleeves covered with dew
Change color as my heart returns

LOVE POEMS

39 (1099) Topic unknown

Harukanaru
Iwa no hazama ni
Hitori ite
Hito me omowade
Mono omowabaya

In the narrow space
Between remote rocks
Being alone
Unafraid of others' eyes
I will grieve over things25

today a border between Ogasa and Haibara districts in Shizuoka prefecture.

23 wakuru--This is a complicated kakekotoba giving rise to a variety of meanings. Its two primary meanings in this context are "to cross" and "to flow forth." The whole expression tsuyu wakuru sode implies "my sleeves upon which dew (and tears) flow forth as I cross through fields." Dew almost always in classical poetry is thought of in relationship with tears.

24 kaerinuru--This verb also acts as a kakekotoba, with the dual meaning of return and change.

25 grieve over things (mono omou)--This expression is particularly related to love affairs. Otherwise there would seem to be no reason to include this poem in the section on love poetry.
40 (1100) Topic unknown

Kaza naranu
Kokoro no toga ni
Nashi hateji
Shirasete koso wa
Mi wo mo uramime

I will not in the end
Blame my love
That is unworthy;
But when I let her know
Then I will hate myself

41 (1147) Topic unknown

Nani to naki
Sasuga ni oshiki
Inochi kana
Arie ba hito ya
Omoishiru to te

Somehow
I feel reluctant to lose
This life of mine
At the thought that if I live on
Perhaps she may learn my feelings

26 This vague poem seems to indicate that, although the man feels himself unworthy of his lover, his unworthiness itself will not be the cause of their seemingly inevitable estrangement. Rather, it will be caused by the manifestation of this unworthiness. Thus, a distinction is made between a latent quality and its translation into action. When this characteristic becomes obvious to the woman, then he will hate himself. This minute probing into the reasons for the impending demise of their romance does not occur in other transcriptions of this poem. In these variant texts, the verb hate ru is given in a positive form, hatete, rather than in the negative hate ji. The poem then could be translated as:

I will in the end
Blame my love
That is unworthy;
When I let her know
I shall hate myself
42 (1143) Topic unknown

Omoishiru
Hitokai no
Yo-nariseba
Tsukisezu
Uramizaramashi

If there were someone
In this world who understood me
Now in the dawning
I should not feel such endless grief
At the moon lingering in the sky

43 (1155) Topic unknown

Au made no
Inochi mogana to
Omoishi wa
Kuyashikarikeru
Waga kokoro kana

I thought
"If only I have life
Just until we meet"
But now how I regret
I did not ask for more

44 (1185) Topic unknown

Omokage no
Wasurarumajiki
 Wakare kana
 Nagori wo hito no
 Tsuki ni todomete

It is a parting
Whose image
We shall not forget
Since we left our remembrances
On the face of the moon

27 ariake--This refers to the time of day when the sun is just rising but the moon still remains in the sky. For court lovers it was a time when, being obliged to part, they begin to muse about their night together. Also ariake acts as a kakekotoba in which ari contains the meaning of the verb "to be."

28 yo--This word is used as a kakekotoba with the dual meaning of "night" and "world."

29 tsukisezu--This is the third kakekotoba employed in the poem. While tsukisezu is the negative of the verb tsukiru, "to end," the first part of the word, tsuki, suggests the word "moon."
45 (1193) Topic unknown

| Ariake wa                                      | At daybreak—^0  
| Omoide are ya                                 | What remembrances come back!  
| Yokogumo no                                   | Banks of clouds  
| Tadayowaretsuru                                | Hovering delicately  
| Shinonome no sora                              | In dawning sky  

46 (1200) Topic unknown

| Hito wa kode                                   | He does not come^31  
| Kaze no keshiki mo                            | And I can tell even from the wind^32  
| Fukanuru ni                                   | How late it has grown—  
| Aware ni kari no                               | How sad it is that wild geese  
| Otozurete yuku                                | Should visit me and pass on  

47 (1205) Written as a love poem^33

| Tanomenu ni                                   | During the evening when,  
| Kimi ku ya to matsu                           | Even though you did not promise  
| Yoi no ma no                                  | I wait wondering if you will come,  
| Fukeyukade tada                                | Without its growing later  
| Akenamashikaba                                | I wish it would dawn  

---

^30 At daybreak Saigyo, the priest, is reminded of his thoughts as an ordinary man leaving a night's tryst.

^31 He does not come—In the well-defined rules of courtly love in Japan, it is the woman who waits for the man to visit her. This poem and the following poem are examples of a man writing love poems from the point of view of women.

^32 Even from the wind—The wind is a strange but effective indicator of the passage of time, if we envision a lonely lover waiting and listening to the wind on an autumn night. The season is suggested by the mention of wild geese.

^33 This poem is written from the point of view of a woman.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>48 (1230) Topic unknown</th>
<th>49 (1231) Topic unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aware to te</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hito no kokoro no&lt;br&gt;Nasake are na&lt;br&gt;Kazu naranu ni wa&lt;br&gt;Yoranu nageki wo**&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>In her lofty heart I wish&lt;br&gt;There was sympathy enough to say</strong>&lt;br&gt;&quot;It is a pity&quot;&lt;br&gt;<strong>My grief is not affected&lt;br&gt;By my lowly state</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mi wo shireba</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hito no toga to wa&lt;br&gt;Omawaru ni&lt;br&gt;Uranigao ni mo&lt;br&gt;Nururu sode kana**&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Since I know what I am</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>I am not concerned</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>In finding fault with her</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>But my tear-soaked sleeve</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Appears so resentful</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 50 (1267) Topic unknown**<br><br>**Tsuki nomi ya<br>Uwa no sora naru<br>Katami ni te<br>Omoi mo ideba<br>Kokoro kayowan**<br><br>**Just the moon<br>Is our keepsake<br>In the sky,<br>When you remember<br>Our hearts will come together** |

| 51 (1268) Topic unknown**<br><br>**Kuma mo naki<br>Ori shimo hito wo<br>Omoidete<br>Kokoro to tsuki wo<br>Yatsushitsuru kana**<br><br>**Just at the time<br>When there is not a single cloud<br>I remember her<br>And then the moon is smeared<br>By the tears of my heart** |

---

34 This poem, along with the previous one, refers to Saigyō's love for a woman of higher rank than his own.

35 This poem also appears in the miscellaneous section of the *Sankashū* with the following topic, "When I was in seclusion in a remote place I sent this to my beloved in the capital when the moon was shining."
52 (1269) Topic unknown

Mono omoite
Nagamuru koro no
Tsuki no iro ni
Ika bakari naru
Aware souran

Whenever I gaze into it,
Grieving over things,
Why does the sorrow
In the moon's brightness
Become so much more sad?

53 (1297) Topic unknown

Utoku naru
Hito wo nani to te
Uramuran
Shirarezu shiranu
Ori mo arishi ni

Why must I resent her
Now that she has grown distant
Since there was a time when,
Unknown myself, I knew her not?

54 (1298) Topic unknown

Ima zo shiru
Omoiide yo to
Chigirishi wa
Wasuren to te no
Nasake narikeri

Now I understand
When we promised each other
To remember
It was meant to be a love
We would soon forget.

55 (1307) Topic unknown

Aware to te
Tou hito no nado
Nakaruran
Mono omou yado no
Ogi no uwakaze

Why is there
No one to visit me,
Expressing their pity
Oh, wind above the reeds
Outside my hut in which I grieve?
56 (1470) Topic unknown

Yo no naka wo
Omoeba nabete
Chiru hana no
Waga mi wo satemo
Izuchi kamo sen

When I contemplate
The nature of this world
All is like the blossoms that fall-
To what should I give myself for now?

57 (1530) Topic unknown

Tsuki wo mite
Kokoro ukareshi
Inishie no
Aki ni mo sara ni
Meguriainuru

I used to be light-hearted
When I looked at the moon
And now, afresh,
I have met
Those autumns of old

58 (1531) Topic unknown

Yo mo sugara
Tsuki koso sode ni
Yadorikere
Mukashi no aki wo
Omoiizureba

Throughout the night
The mood lodges
In my tear-soaked sleeve
Because I was reminded
Of the autumns of the past

59 (1532) Topic unknown

Tsuki no iro ni
Kokoro wo kiyoku
Somemashi ya
Miyako wo idenu
Waga mi nariseba

Would my spirits
Be dyed purely
The color of the moon
If I had not left the capital?

36 For a discussion of this poem and the four following poems see page 72.
60 (1533) Topic unknown

Sutsu to naraba
Ukiyo wo itou
Shirushi aran
Ware miba kumore
Aki no yo no tsuki

If I abandoned my former life
There must be proof
That I despise the floating
world;
But when I look, make the
clouds cover you
Moon on an autumn night!

61 (1534) Topic unknown

Fukenikeru
Waga mi no kage wo
Omou ma ni
Haruka ni tsuki no
Katabuki

While considering
The faded image
Of myself
In the distance
The moon has set

37 See discussion below.

Poems nos. 57-61—These five poems, in which the moon is the central image, are found in sequence in the Shinkokinshū (nos. 1530-1534). Since the first two poems were composed in the Sankashū and the last three, somewhat later, in the Mimosugawa utaawase, Saigyō did not originally conceive of the five poems in relation to one another. However, the editors of the Shinkokinshū ingeniously arranged these poems in such a way as to present the various meanings of the moon-image at different periods in Saigyō's life giving us, I believe, a summary of Saigyō's life, or indeed that of any Buddhist priest.

The appearance of the moon in Japanese literature is, as in the rest of the world, an esthetically moving event, and one which is frequently connected with romance. In classical Japanese poetry particularly, the moon provokes its viewers to recollect past adventures under its soft light. Somewhat paradoxically, the moon also symbolizes the Buddhist future ideal of enlightenment. This contradiction in the connotations of the moon thus is especially appropriate to the conflicts between Saigyō's human emotions and his religious conviction.

In the first poem, no. 57, Saigyō as a priest is reminded upon seeing the moon of the light-hearted romantic days of his secular life. This is not at all a melancholy or self-censuring remembrance. In the next poem, no. 58, the more usual sadness associated with moon-invoked recollection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kumo kakaru</td>
<td>When autumn comes around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tōyama bata no</td>
<td>The edge of the distant mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aki sareba</td>
<td>Where the clouds hang--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omoiyaru dani</td>
<td>Only to imagine it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanashiki mono wo</td>
<td>Is so melancholy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62 (1560) Topic unknown

Appears as the moon is reflected in the tears on his sleeve. Poem no. 59 most certainly presents the moon as a Buddhist symbol. Saigyō seems to suggest that he could not have become a devoted Buddhist ("by dyed purely the color of the moon") if he remained among the temptations of the capital as most of the more compromising priests did. However, in poem no. 60, as he so often does, Saigyō suggests that he is not as dissociated from the attractions of the secular life as he sometimes pretends or as he believes a serious priest should be. He must ask the moon to cloud itself over to keep him from being reminded of the "floating world," the gaiety of his former existence. The moon as a Buddhist symbol is completely over powered by this momentary resurgence of human feeling. In the last poem, no. 61, the moon-image takes on the most complex and individual meaning. By use of the enkō, kage Saigyō makes the moon a symbol of his life. Kage, a term meaning the light or reflection of the moon, i.e., that which the moon emits, is utilized in this poem to describe Saigyō himself (I have translated waga mi no kage as "image of myself," i.e., that which one's self emits). In identifying himself with the moon, what he contemplates, his kage, is imbued with the same contradictions of the gaiety of the secular life and the seriousness of enlightenment, as is the moon itself. And while he considers the conflicts of his life, now, as a mature person, he notices that the moon has set in the distance, paralleling the aging which has occurred in him. Several other implications have also been suggested by this simple statement. The setting of the moon (of course, in the West) usually in the poetry of Saigyō and of other priests, symbolizes enlightenment or salvation in the Western Paradise. But Saigyō leaves us with the feeling that he is uncertain as to his own enlightenment. Does "in the distance" then mean simply in the Western Paradise or does it imply out of his reach? This evasiveness, I believe, indicates remarkable humility and depth of character on the part of this celebrated poet.
63 (1611) Composed when visiting Ise

Suzuka\textsuperscript{38} yama & Across Suzuka mountain\textsuperscript{39} \\
Ukiyo wo yoso ni & And shaking off \\
Furisutete\textsuperscript{38} & The floating world for another place \\
Ika ni nariyuku \textsuperscript{38} & What will become of me \\
Waga ni naruran & As I go ringing a bell

64 (1613) Composed about Mt. Fuji when worshipping in the Eastern provinces.

Kaze ni nabiku & Yielding to the wind \\
Fuji no kumori no & Fuji's smoke \\
Sora ni kiete & Dissolves into the sky-- \\
Yukue no shiranu & My thoughts too \\
Waga omoi\textsuperscript{40} kana & Know no destination

\textsuperscript{38}There are a series of \textit{engo} in this poem relating to the bell which a Buddhist pilgrim rings as he goes on his way. \textit{Saigyö} wrote this poem soon after he became a priest, and undertook his first pilgrimage as a priest. Suzuka literally means "Bell Deer" and is the first mention of bell. The \textit{furi} of \textit{furisutete} ("to shake off or away from") is a verb meaning "to shake," as with a bell, and finally the \textit{nari} of \textit{nariyuki} ("to become of a person") is the same sound of another verb meaning "to ring." Thus the verb \textit{nariyuki} is also a \textit{kakekotoba}.

\textsuperscript{39}Suzuka mountain--This is a famous place in Japanese literature, being a pass between the two important areas of Kyoto and Ise.

\textsuperscript{40}The \textit{i} or \textit{hi} of \textit{omoi}--The \textit{i} sound of modern Japanese was often written and perhaps spoken as \textit{hi} in the classical language. Given this fact, Japanese scholars point out that this sound is the same as the word "fire" (\textit{hi}) and as such acts as an \textit{engo} with the word "smoke" (\textit{kemuri}).
65 (1617) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoshino yama</td>
<td>Although I am thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yagata ideji to</td>
<td>I will never again leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omou mi wo</td>
<td>The Yoshino hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana chirinaba to</td>
<td>Will people be waiting for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hito ya matsuran</td>
<td>Thinking, &quot;After the blossomsscatter. . . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66 (1630) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yama fukaku</td>
<td>The mountains are deep;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa koso kokoro wa</td>
<td>Even though one's thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayou tomo</td>
<td>Surely visit them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumade aware wo</td>
<td>Without living there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiran mono kawa</td>
<td>Can one know the pity of things?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67 (1631) Topic unknown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yamakage ni</td>
<td>What are the feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumanu kokoro wa</td>
<td>Of those who despise the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika nare ya</td>
<td>But do not live in a mountain recess?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oshimarete iru</td>
<td>Since it is a world in which,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuki mo aru yo ni</td>
<td>Even though it is regretted,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The moon also hides in the mountains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41Because the Yoshino hills are famous for their cherry blossoms, people expect the poet to return after the blossoms have fallen.

42Sumanu--While this word means "to not live (in a place)" it is also the same sound as the negative form of the verb "to be clear or shine." Both meanings are utilized in this poem. The second meaning "to not shine" acts as an engo with the moon in a rather circumlocutory fashion. While it modifies kokoro, the minds of those who despise the world, in the second line, it also relates to the moon in the last line to mean the moon hides in the mountains. The reasoning of Japanese scholars seems to run as follows: if the moon does not shine while in the mountains, it is therefore hiding in the mountains. What the poem means is similar to the previous poem. The Buddhist moon, enlightenment, hides in the
Anyone living in such a place
Would understand loneliness—
In a mountain village
Rain falling hard
From an evening sky.

Not making a broken-branch trail
I will penetrate
Deeper into the mountains;
I wonder if there is a place
Where I will not hear dismal things?

I wish I had a friend
Who had given up the floating world
We would discuss the past
Which has regrettably gone by

It was not my idea
To forbid others to come here
To this mountain village;
But somehow I am now visited
So infrequently

mountains and although people do not like it, it is necessary to actually go there and hide from society to experience it.
72 (1674) Topic unknown

Furuha
ta no
Soba no tachiki ni
Ir
to
Tom
Sugoki yūgure

In a tree standing
Beside the desolate field
The voice of a dove
Calling to friends--
Lonely, terrible evening

73 (1675) Topic unknown

Yamagatsu no
Kataoka kakete
Shimuru no no
Sakai ni tateru
Tama no o yanagi

Standing at the boundary of
the field
Which is occupied
As far as the steep hill
By the mountain villagers--
The beautiful jewel-string willow!

74 (1676) Topic unknown

Shigeki no wo
Iku hitomura ni
Wakenashite
Sara ni mukashi wo
Shinobikaesan

I have made my way through
Lush fields to how many a town
And will again return to them
To recall the past

75 (1677) Topic unknown

Mukashi mishi
Niwa no komatsu ni
Toshi furite
Arashi no oto wo
Kozue ni zo kiku

The years have passed
For the pine sapling
In the garden where I saw it
in the past
Now I hear the roar of a storm
In its branches!

43Jewel-string (tama no o)--This is the only example
of the use of a makurakotoba or pillow-word among Saigō's
poems in the Shinkokinshū. A pillow-word is a conventional
epithet.
76 (1680) Topic unknown

Kore ya mishi
Mukashi sumiken
Ato naran
Yomogi ga tsuyu ni
Tsuki no kakareru

Is this the remains
Of where I lived
In the past that I still see?
In the dewdrops on the yomogi brush
The image of the moon is formed

77 (1746) Topic unknown

Kazu naranu
Mi wo mo kokoro no
Mochigao ni
Ukarete wa mata
Kerikinikeri

I am truly insignificant
But, being high-spirited
In assuming the appearance of wisdom
Again I return to the temple

78 (1747) Topic unknown

Orokanarar
Kokoro no hiku ni
Makasete mo
Sate sawa ika ni
Tsui no omoi wa

If I had submitted
To the pull
Of my foolish heart
And gone on as I was,
What then of my thoughts of death?

44 Kakarem--This verb is an engo used in relationship with dew--"dewdrops form." Saigyo utilizes this association in describing the manner in which the moon is reflected in the dew as though it were formed like the dew itself. Dew (tsuyu) always in classical Japanese poetry suggests tears, so the dew on the brush acts in a two-fold manner implying that the location of his former home is overgrown with weeds and that the scene invokes a tearful memory.

45 Yomogi--The English equivalent is mugwort, wormwood, and sagebrush; the Latin name is Artemisia indica. The appearance of this weed indicates that a garden has grown wild.

46 Kokoro no Mochigao--Other texts give this expression as kokoro no arigao but the meaning is the same, that is "assuming the appearance of wisdom or virtue."

47 This is an unusual example of humorous self-criticism in classical poetry. While he is out on his daily missions from the temple, Saigyo's sense of self-importance rises, which is inappropriate with his priestly tasks. Some commentaries suggest he returns to the capital indicating longer missions to the countryside.
79 (1748) Topic unknown

Toshitsuki wo
Ikade wagæ mi ni
Okuriken
Kinö no hito mo
Kyö wa naki yo ni

How did I pass
Through these months and years
In a world
Where yesterday's person
Is today no longer?

80 (1749) Topic unknown

Ukegataki
Hito no sugata ni
Ukabiidete
Korizu ya dare mo
Mata shizumubeki

Coming to the surface of the
world
In the difficult form of man
Everyone, not heeding experience,
Again shall sink

81 (1778) Topic unknown

Izuku ni mo
Sumarezuba tada
Sumade aran
Shiba no iori no
Shibashi aru yo ni

If it is difficult
To live in any particular place
I shall make no home
In a world where a brush hut
Remains just for a while

82 (1779) Topic unknown

Tsuki no yuku
Yama ni kokoro wo
Okuriirete
Yami naru ato no
Mi wo ikani sen

I send forth my soul
To the mountains
Where the moon goes;
But in the darkened aftermath
What becomes of my flesh?

Saigyö wrote this poem when he viewed a screen portraying hell. In the Buddhist scheme of reincarnation, it is most difficult to become a man, the last stage necessary before becoming enlightened and breaking the chain of reincarnation. However, as Saigyo points out in this poem, people do not heed experience, including memory of their good deeds in their previous life and sink into hell where they are reborn again.
83 (1808) Topic unknown

Mataretsuru
Iriai no kane no
Oto sunari
Asu no ya araba
Kikan to suran

There is the sound
Of the sunset temple bell
For which I have been waiting
If for me there is a tomorrow night
Perhaps I would hear it again

84 (1828) Topic unknown

Yo wo itou
Na wo dani mo sa wa
Todome Kitsu
Kazu naranu mi no
Omoide ni sen

That I disdain the world--
This alone I will leave behind;
Such a humble person as myself
Will be remembered for this

85 (1829) Topic unknown

Mi no usa wo
Omoishirade ya
Yaminamashi
Somuku narai no
Naki yo nari seba

Might I not have come to an end
Without knowing sorrow
If it were a world
Where the practise of turning one's back
Did not exist?

86 (1830) Topic unknown

Ikaga subeki
Yo ni arabaya wa
Yo wo mo sutete
Ana u no yo ya to
Sara ni omowan

What should I do now?
If I were in the world
Then I would abandon it
And think once again
"Oh, what a bitter world"

49 i.e., become a priest.
87 (1831)  Topic unknown

Nanigoto ni
Tomaru kokoro no
Arikereba
Sara ni shimo mata
Yo no itowashiki

To what thing
Is my heart attached
So that I yet again
Must despise the world

88 (1842)  Topic unknown

Nasake arishi
Mukashi nomi nao
Shinobarete
Nagaraema uki
Yo ni mo furu kana

Thinking back still
To times only in the past
When there was elegance
I pass my years in this gloomy world

89 (1844)  When Jakuren, a prevailing upon people, tried to have them compose a hundred-poem sequence, I refused and went on a pilgrimage to Kumano. On the way, in my dreams the head priest Tanka of Kumano said to Shunzei of the third rank, "Even though everything declines, this way of Japanese poetry indeed will not change even at the 'End of the World' and so one should write poetry [at every occasion]." I awoke with a start and immediately wrote the poems for Jakuren and sent them to him. At the end I added this poem.

Sue no yo mo
Kono nasake nomi
Kawarazu to
Mishi yume nakuba
Yoso ni kikamashi

If it were not for a dream
In which I saw
This elegance of Japanese poetry unchanged
Even in the decaying world
I would have listened as though elsewhere

50Although now a priest, Saigyo discovers his heart is still attached to something or someone in the "floating world." He thought that after becoming a priest he would be unconcerned with worldly matters which make him despise the world.

51Jakuren (d. 1202), a poet-priest, was a friend of Saigyo and an editor of the Shinkokinshū.

52Shunzei (1114-1204), as the leading poet of the Nijo school, became the most influential poet of his period. His friendship with Saigyo and appreciation of his poetry helped Saigyo win recognition in the poetry circles in the capital.

53The End of the World--This phrase refers to
SHINTO POEMS

90 (1877) Topic unknown

Miyabashira
Shita tsu iwane ni
Shikitatete
Tsuyu mo kumoranu
Hi no mikage kana

The shrine's pillars
Stand solidly erected
On rocks beneath the ground
And the majestic sun's rays
Do not in the least cloud over

91 (1878) Topic unknown

Kamiji yama
Tsuki sayakanaru
Chikai arite
Ame no shita wo ba
Terasu narikeri

Because the gods have vowed that
The moon over
The Mountain of the Path of the Gods
Will always be bright
How it shines on all under heaven

Buddhist period of Mappō, the Latter End of the Law. "It is derived from Buddhist scriptures which predicted that, some 2,000 years after the Buddha's death, his teaching would lose its power and, owing to man's depravity, fall upon degenerate days. The word was a technical religious term, but it seems to have seized the imagination of the Japanese and to have gained currency by the 11th century. The number of years that had elapsed since the Buddha's death accorded with the prophecy, and there were [political and economic] reasons enough for regarding the times as degenerate." Sansom, Japan: A Short Cultural History, p. 242.

54 This poem refers to a passage in the Nihongi, according to Shiori Masao in Shinkokin waka-shū hyōshaku, concerning the birth of the Sun and the Moon by Izanagi and Izanami. Aston has translated this passage as follows: "They then together produced the Sun goddess... The resplendent lustre of this child shone throughout all the six quarters. Therefore the two Dieties rejoiced, saying--'We have had many children, but none of them have been equal to this wondrous infant. She ought not be kept long in this land, but we ought of our own accord send her at once to heaven and entrust to her the affairs of heaven..."

They then produced the Moon-god... His radiance was
92 (1879) Written on seeing the moon during a visit to Tsukiyomi shrine at Ise.

Sayaka naru From the cloud-well sky
Washi no takane no Over Eagle's Peak 55
Kumoi yori Where it is bright
Kage yowagaruru The moon light is softened 56
Tsukiyomi no mori In the forest of Tsukiyomi

dnext to that of the Sun in splendour. This God was to be the consort of the Sun-Goddess and to share in her government. They therefore sent him also to Heaven." Aston, Nihongi, pp.18-19

55Eagle's Peak--The place in India where it is believed Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra.

56"The softening of moon light" is a concept which is essential to the propagation of Buddhism. Moonlight refers to Buddhist enlightenment or the principles which are embodied in enlightenment. This light was brightest when Buddha himself propounded his faith in such places as Eagle's Peak. But for those who are less educated and for those distant in time and place from its origin, his teachings must be molded, the light must be softened, by appropriate means, hōben. Thus the enlightened bodhisatva, the propagator, must develop techniques suited to the milieu and to individual abilities to enable all to find the way to enlightenment. To accomplish this, throughout the development of Buddhism in India, China, and especially in Japan, Buddhists encouraged a fusion of its doctrines with native religion.

In Japan, Buddhists were greatly aided in this process by many Buddhist-inspired imperial rulers. While being attracted to the more sophisticated foreign religion, these sovereigns were attributed divine status by the indigenous cult of Shinto. Thus for a variety of political and moral reasons, they sought to reconcile native belief with the imported Buddhist faith. Among the numerous actions which furthered the fusion of the two religions was the erection of a Buddhist temple in 786 beside the Ise shrines which is the holiest Shinto sanctuary being the headquarters of the worship of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, from which the imperial line claimed descent.

Fundamental to the process of molding Buddhist doctrine to local belief was the Mahayana conception of honji suijaku, "original substance manifests traces," which meant local deities could be described as avatars of Buddha. This theory in Japan was particularly connected with the Shingon sect,
BUDDHIST POEMS

93 (1977) A reply poem

Tachirade
Kumoma wo wakashi
Tsukikage wa
Matanu keshiki ya
Sora ni mieken

The moonlight
That failed to enter your house
Though it broke through the clouds
Must have seen from the sky
That you were not waiting

with which Saigyō was associated. In the twelfth century the most important fusion of Buddhism and Shinto developed called Ryōbu-Shinto or Dual Shinto. This term derived from the equation made between the two mandalas of Shingon Buddhism and the Inner and Outer shrines at Ise. In the above poem Saigyō finds the Tsukiyomi shrine particularly expressive of the relationship of Shinto and Buddhism in Japan.

This poem was written in reply to a poem composed by Lady Horikawa, who at one time was a lady-in-waiting for Taiken-mon-in, the mother of emperor Sutoku and member of the Tokudaiji family, with which Saigyō was closely associated. When Lady Horikawa was living at Ninna-ji after the death of Taiken-mon-in, Saigyō said he would visit her but she became busy and forgot to make arrangements. The following poem including the topic was originally recorded in the Sankashū. It also appears in the Shinkokinshū (no. 1976)

When I called for Saigyō, he said he would visit me but he did not come. Later I heard he was passing before the gate in the bright moonlight and I sent him this poem.

Nishi e yuku
Shirube to omou
Tsukikage no
Sora-danome koso
Kai nakarikere

I thought that you would guide me
To go to the west
But my empty wish
For the moonlight
Was indeed in vain

The west and the moonlight have their usual connotations of the Western Paradise and enlightenment, respectively. In this poem these words are also related specifically to Saigyō. The characters in Saigyō's name mean "go west," and Lady Horikawa identifies Saigyō with the moonlight, the enlightened one who can guide her to the Western Paradise. Her hopes for Saigyō's guidance and for enlightenment were not fulfilled. Saigyō continues this dual meaning of the moonlight in his skillful reply.
94 (1979) Written about understanding one's consciousness.

Yami harete
Kokoro no sora ni
Sumu tsuki wa
Nishi no yamabe ya
Chikaku naruran

The pure moon
Which has cleared up the darkness
And shines in the sky of my mind
Must be nearing
The region of the Western mountain

58 The region of the Western mountain—The region of the mountains, yamabe, is an engo related to the moon, since the moon sets in the western mountains. The Western mountains act as the usual symbol for the Western Paradise. This poem suggests Saigyō’s final enlightenment and salvation and, as it is the last poem in the Shinkokinshū, makes an exhilarating climax to the entire anthology.
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