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## Why Did Saigyō Become a Monk? An Archeology of the Reception of Saigyō's Shukke

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## Why Did Saigyō Become a Monk? An Archeology of the Reception of Saigyō's *Shukke*

Jack Stoneman

そらになる心は春の霞にて世にあらじとも思ひ立つかな

<i>sora ni naru</i>	The empty sky
<i>kokoro wa haru no</i>	of my heart
<i>kasumi nite</i>	shrouded in spring mist
<i>yo ni araji to mo</i>	rises to thoughts
<i>omoi tatsu kana</i>	of leaving the world behind. <sup>1</sup>

Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190) is a significant figure in Japanese cultural history, not least because of his preeminent position as the most included poet in the imperially-sponsored anthology *Shinkokin wakashū* 新古今和歌集 (1207, hereafter *Shinkokinshū*), the crystallized and canonized repository of late-Heian period poetic tastes. Although later absorbed into dominant poetic trends, Saigyō was an innovator and sometime fringe figure in his own time. He is nevertheless also representative of many important developments of the twelfth century, including movements within Buddhism toward eremitism and syncretism; increasingly byzantine relations among aristocratic, warrior, and Buddhist cultures; and the burgeoning culture of travel, especially to the East, as both poetic tourism and peripatetic Buddhist practice. Saigyō became the poet-pilgrim par excellence for later generations of readers, securing a prominent place within a popular culture that has always seemed to valorize the solitary wandering bard.

Saigyō was born Satō Norikiyo 佐藤義清, the eldest son of a wealthy warrior family. The fourteenth-century genealogical record *Sonpi bunmyaku* 尊卑分脈 seems to place Norikiyo's only brother Nakakiyo 仲清 as the eldest, but Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (c. 1155–1216) identified him as the younger brother.<sup>2</sup> Saigyō became a retainer to the Tokudaiji 徳大寺 family at age fifteen and was later chosen to join Retired Emperor Toba's 鳥羽院 (1103–1156) Northern Guard (*hokumen no bushi* 北面の

武士), an elite group of bodyguards and companions.<sup>3</sup> He suddenly abandoned this post and his family to become a monk at age twenty-two. This entry into religious life is called *shukke* 出家, which literally means to “leave one’s house” to enter Buddhist priesthood or nunhood.<sup>4</sup> Until his death at the age of seventy two, Saigyō continued to live as a Buddhist monk, alternately spending time in reclusion and traveling about the country. Throughout his life, he composed *waka*, gaining increasing fame as an accomplished but sometimes unconventional poet, employing diction and expression that was outside the canons of taste for the time.<sup>5</sup> Reliable historical documents concerning Saigyō’s life are scarce, and yet the autobiographical nature of many of his poems has fed the imagination of readers for centuries, giving rise to a vast body of semi-legendary material. It is now nearly impossible to separate the long-accumulated legends of Saigyō from the historical poet and his poems.

Why are there not legends about Jien 慈円 (also Jichin, 1155–1225), the powerful Tendai abbot and poet? He was a well-known monk and prolific poet who imitated Saigyō’s style. Although Saigyō’s ninety-four poems in *Shinkokinshū* topped any other poet, Jien is only two poems behind at ninety-two. Why are there not legends, stories, and plays about Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (also Toshinari, 1114–1204), another contemporary of Saigyō, the most influential poet and poetry judge of his day and someone who became a monk himself? Surely he experienced *shukke*. It seems that the tonsuring of these two men was not dramatic enough, or perhaps too easy to explain. Jien, born into an important aristocratic family, was tonsured at age twelve after having already lived in a temple as a child acolyte. He was a “career” priest. Shunzei took holy vows late in life, prompted by a serious illness. Their tonsuring may not have been dramatic, yet perhaps some other event in their lives might have triggered the development of story and legend. But this is not the case.

It is the case with Saigyō. His *shukke* was sudden, unexpected, and had far-reaching effects on the development of his poetic style and the life story that would become legend in later centuries. However, William R. LaFleur points to Saigyō’s death, not tonsuring, as the dramatic catalyst that set in motion the legend-building. In LaFleur’s analysis, Saigyō’s death was perceived as miraculous since it came at the same time as the historical Buddha’s death (middle of the second month) and was “predicted” by Saigyō himself in a poem composed years earlier.

願はくは花のしたにて春死なむそのきさらぎの望月のころ

*negawaku wa*

My wish is to die

<i>hana no shita nite</i>	in spring
<i>haru shinamu</i>	under the cherry blossoms—
<i>sono kisaragi no</i>	on that day in the Second Month
<i>mochizuki no koro</i>	when the moon is full. <sup>6</sup>

LaFleur argues that the miraculous nature of his death became the catalyst for the development of a hagiography. Writers of his sacred biography worked backwards in an effort to find other resonances with the life of the Buddha in Saigyō's life and poetry. Hence, efforts to model his *shukke* on that of the Buddha, or ascribe dramatic circumstances to the event, were part of the hagiographic process of turning Saigyō's life into an *exemplary* life.<sup>7</sup> Whether it was indeed his death that initiated widespread interest in his tonsuring or not, both events and many in between have long been tied to both his poetry and later storytelling.

This is also the case with Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–880), a poet long surrounded by legend. His exile to the East was the catalyst for much storytelling, most prominently *The Tales of Ise* 伊勢物語 (tenth century?), a collection of poem-based episodes purportedly from the life of Narihira. Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (ninth century) is also a poet of great legend but little biography whose few poems have long been “plugged into” a narrative framework of the dramatic fall of a great beauty into ugliness and poverty. In the cases of Komachi, Narihira, and Saigyō, some traumatic or dramatic event or transition occurred (or at least was believed to have occurred) in each life which was both indicative of the poet's personality or temperament and the mechanism that set in motion the remainder of his or her life and poetic style. Additionally, each of these poets has left poems that, though not always strictly autobiographical, nevertheless yield introspective content, or encourage a biographical interpretive approach. When a dramatic life coincides with poems that can easily be read as refractions of that life, speculation and story-building follow. This process has yet to run its course even in the twenty-first-century reception of Saigyō and his poems.

Although it is still impossible to know the exact reasons why Saigyō became a Buddhist monk in the winter of 1140, there is value in asking the question one more time—not in an effort to find a definitive answer, but to see what answers have been offered and what those answers tell us about the reception of his poetry and persona.<sup>8</sup> His decision to become a monk remains the great mystery of his life, and a central focus of both popular imagination and scholarly inquiry over the last eight centuries. In the process of attempting to explain this mystery, writers have in fact contributed to the creation of the Saigyō persona that has become an enduring feature of the cultural landscape of Japan. This essay will explore

eight theories, or groups of theories, that explain Saigyō's *shukke* from a variety of premodern and modern sources in order to better understand the ways in which individuals, cultural groups, and scholarly communities have constructed the Saigyō we know today. In the course of this exploration I will examine two important processes in Saigyō reception. The first process illustrates how the perceived intersection of biography and poetry was a powerful catalyst for the development of legend as Saigyō's remarkable careers as a samurai *and* a monk *and* a poet became of utmost importance to readers and storytellers as they interpreted his often introspective and autobiographical poems.<sup>9</sup> The second process illustrates the tendency to transform popular cultural icons to suit the values and interests of ever-changing audiences as images of Saigyō and his poems became vehicles for the diverse expectations and identities of readers from the twelfth century to the present.

Scholar and poet Kawada Jun, in his 1939 work *Saigyō*, was the first modern writer to systematically describe theories surrounding Saigyō's *shukke*. He listed four theories:

1. General world-weariness (*ippan ensei* 一般厭世)
2. Love affair cause (*ren'ai gen'in* 恋愛原因)
3. Political cause (*seiji gen'in* 政治原因)
4. General (or cumulative) causes (*sōgō gen'in* 綜合原因)<sup>10</sup>

To this list may be added several theories that were either ignored by Kawada or have been developed since his time, as will be discussed below. Kawada is not alone in his interest in and approach to Saigyō's *shukke*. Most scholars of Saigyō and his poetry deal with this mystery as an element of his biography, rendering an opinion on the most likely cause and often marshalling poems to support one theory or another.<sup>11</sup>

My approach will differ. I am concerned with what the theories, their generation, and their reception (especially when received in tandem with certain poems) tell us about the process of creating what Japanese scholars call the *Saigyōzō* 西行像, or "Saigyō Persona."<sup>12</sup> I will also consider what the constructions and reconstructions of this still developing "Saigyō Persona" tell us about those who have invested themselves in that process over the centuries. New theories concerning Saigyō's *shukke* have been published as recently as the last decade, and may continue to appear.<sup>13</sup> It is time we take a thorough look at the history of this fascination with Saigyō's tonsuring.

### An Archeology of Reception

A certain amount of guesswork is inevitable when attempting to reconstruct Saigyō's *shukke*, especially since the artifacts are primarily poems

which may reflect Saigyō the persona more than Saigyō the person. The common mode of reception has been to compare poems, to piece them together, as if shards of pottery, into what readers imagine the vessel, Saigyō, would have “looked” like. This vessel, which really exists in the minds of readers, is the *Saigyōzō* mentioned above. Similarly, my recovery of the many layers of reception of Saigyō’s tonsuring requires me to make connections among sundry times and persons and draw conclusions about the motives and cultural milieux of those who have attempted to explain it. Guiding questions in my search through layer after layer of reception have been: Why are we so curious about a poet’s life? Why, in the case of Saigyō, has there always been such an intense interest in linking his poems with his life? Perhaps these questions are too broad to be answered fully in this essay, but I do aim to show *how* readers have articulated their interest in the intersections of literature and life in the case of Saigyō, and begin to explore answers as to what this sort of reception means.

The deepest layer of this archeology is an entry in the diary of the powerful aristocrat and Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Yorinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–1156), written less than two years after Saigyō became a monk (*Taiki* 台記, c. 1136–1155):

Now, this Saigyō is the former Imperial Guard Norikiyo. (He is the son of Imperial Guard of the Right Yasukiyo.) For generations the family has been valiant warriors who served the priestly retired emperors. From his secular days he put his heart into the Buddhist Way. His family is wealthy, and he is young, and though he had no sorrows in his heart, in the end he left the world behind. People were awed by this.<sup>14</sup>

This paragraph functions as a “footnote” to the main entry, in which Yorinaga describes Saigyō visiting his home in order to solicit the copying of a sutra to commemorate the *shukke* of the empress Taikenmon-in 待賢門院 (1101–1145). Yorinaga observes only that Saigyō was interested in Buddhism from before his tonsuring, going on to point out why he should not have taken the tonsure: wealth, youth, and contentment. The “awe” (*tanbi* 歎美) is evidence of the unusual impression Saigyō’s *shukke* made on observers, who perceived his circumstances as incongruous to such a drastic step into a religious life at such a young age.<sup>15</sup> It appears that observers of the time viewed *shukke* as the result of something other than simply interest in Buddhism, such as personal tragedy, familial occupation, or other factors.<sup>16</sup> Their surprise at the perceived contradiction in Saigyō’s case reveals a contemporary attitude toward

*shukke* that is likely part of the urge to dramatize Saigyō's tonsuring during the medieval era (twelfth to sixteenth centuries).

The fourteenth-century genealogy *Sonpi bunmyaku* simply noted: "Due to his heart being committed to the Way, he was suddenly awakened to the truth, and took the tonsure."<sup>17</sup> Other accounts of Saigyō's *shukke*, such as *Saigyō monogatari* 西行物語 (*The Tale of Saigyō*), also emphasize this suddenness.<sup>18</sup> The contradiction observed by Yorinaga, rather than simply remaining a part of the story, became the locus of story-building. Many legendary materials such as *Saigyō monogatari* were born from later efforts to explain the reasons for his startling move. All modern scholarly biographies devote space to the mystery of his *shukke*, considering it the true "birth" of "Saigyō" and a defining moment for his poetic expression. Likewise, many of the biographical novels of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries begin with or center on a dramatization of the circumstances of his tonsuring. Nevertheless, only a few scholars have ever attempted to systematically categorize all theories (Kawada was one of the first). Most recount two or three of the most widely popular. Recently, Shimonishi Zenzaburō listed eleven theories culled from a variety of sources. Several theories which Shimonishi categorizes independently are subsumed in one or another of my more inclusive categories.<sup>19</sup>

### 1. Death theories

Within a half-century of his death, Saigyō's life had been transformed into narrative by the anonymous writers of *Saigyō monogatari*. These writers, perhaps longing for a more direct incentive, linked Saigyō's decision to the death of a close friend. The death of a loved one was sometimes the impetus for a person to take the tonsure in Heian-period Japan. Loved ones' deaths were common elements of "narratives of awakening" (*hosshintan* 発心譚, sometimes pronounced *hosshindan*). The following episode, unique to *Saigyō monogatari*, recounts the death of a fellow samurai, Satō Noriyasu 佐藤義康:

He and an intimate friend, imperial guardsman Satō Noriyasu, who served in the same imperial guards, obeyed an imperial command to wait on the retired emperor, and when they were returning together from the Toba Palace that night they promised each other that they would attend there together the next morning in particular splendour. (They parted and) Noriyasu remained at Shichijō Ōmiya. The next morning when Saigyō called in on his way to fetch him, he found a noisy crowd of people thronging the gateway, and heard from within the sound of various voices crying and lamenting: "The

young master died suddenly last night.” Upon hearing the unrestrained weeping of the nineteen-year-old wife and the mother of eighty some years, his heart grew yet darker. He thought of the flame before the wind, dew on the floating lotus leaf, dream within dream, and longed to cut off his hair then and there; but he thought he must first visit the retired emperor one last time and beg leave from his service, and he hastened his steed (towards the palace), yet tears overflowed his sleeves as he went. Now this man (Noriyasu) was two years his senior, and in his twenty-seventh year. Norikiyo sorrowed at this proof of how all must die, some proceeding and some following, and as he went muttered:

朝有紅顔誇世路 夕成白骨朽郊原

<i>ashita ni kōgan atte</i>	At morning pinkcheeked and youthful,
<i>seiro ni hokori</i>	we are proud in the world,
<i>yūbe ni hakkotsu to natte</i>	but at evening our whitened bones
<i>kōgen ni kutsu</i>	rot in a field.

He then composed:

越えぬればまたもこの世に帰来ぬ死出の山路ぞ悲しかりける

<i>koenureba</i>	Once crossed
<i>mata mo kono yo ni</i>	there is no returning
<i>kaeri konu</i>	to this world—
<i>shide no yamaji zo</i>	how sorrowful the path
<i>kanashikarikeru</i>	to the Mountain of Death!

世の中を夢とみるみるはかなくもなほ驚かぬわが心かな

<i>yo no naka o</i>	All in the world
<i>yume to miru miru</i>	is a dream, I see,
<i>hakanaku mo</i>	and seeing its transience,
<i>nao odorokanu</i>	yet still, still
<i>waga kokoro kana</i>	my heart does not awake!

年月をいかでわが身に送りけむ昨日見し人けふはなき世に

<i>toshitsuki o</i>	Why have the years and months
<i>ikade waga mi ni</i>	been good to me,
<i>okurikemu</i>	in a world

<i>kinō mishi hito</i>	where someone I saw yesterday
<i>kyō wa naki yo ni</i>	today is gone? <sup>20</sup>

As with other *shukke* theories, this theory arose out of a need to provide a dramatic setting for an otherwise inexplicable event.

For centuries after the inception of *Saigyō monogatari*, the death of Satō Noriyasu was accepted as a likely factor in Saigyō's decision to become a monk. In the twentieth century, however, scholars relying upon documentary evidence have dismissed Satō Noriyasu as a fabrication, a narrative expedient. As Meredith McKinney and Kuwabara Hiroshi have both pointed out, there is no evidence that Noriyasu ever existed.<sup>21</sup> He is likely a creation of the author(s) of *Saigyō monogatari*. McKinney, calling also upon Yamaguchi Makoto's assertions, posits that Noriyasu is a negative, or "shadow," figure to Norikiyo, much as Saijū 西住 is to Saigyō.<sup>22</sup> His presence in the tale is to show the negative, or opposite, side of Norikiyo's potential, thus providing a stark enough contrast to the positive step of *shukke* to propel him into the Buddhist path.

Nevertheless, those who hold to the "death theory" suggest that if not the death of Noriyasu, then that of another loved one was a factor. Yamaki Kōichi posited that Saigyō's father Yasukiyo 康清 may have died or taken the tonsure himself while his son was still young.<sup>23</sup> Either major event may have influenced the young Norikiyo to seek the Buddhist Way from his youth. However, there is no account of such events, apart from Yasukiyo's dropping out of the official records when his son was around two years of age. Aside from Yasukiyo's disappearance from official records, both Yamaki and Yasuda Ayao cited the following poem in their treatment of the Yasukiyo theory:

源氏物語の巻々を見るに読める

*Genji monogatari no makimaki o miru ni yomeru*

Composed while viewing the fascicles of the *Tale of Genji*

もえいづる峯のさわらびなき人のかたみにつみて見るもはかなし

<i>moeizuru</i>	Brackens from the hills
<i>mine no sawarabi</i>	now shooting forth
<i>naki hito no</i>	I pick as mementos
<i>katami ni tsumite</i>	of one now gone,
<i>miru mo hakanashi</i>	but in vain . . . <sup>24</sup>

This poem, based upon Naka no Kimi's poem from the "Bracken Shoots" chapter lamenting the loss of her father, is the only poem that records

Saigyō's experience of viewing the *Tale of Genji*.<sup>25</sup> It is striking that this would be the only poem in the entire tale that moved Saigyō to compose; but it is also possible that we do not have a record of the other *Genji* poems he created. Is it coincidence that he composed a poem about losing a father? Saigyō mentions his father in only one other poem from a sequence composed while viewing pictures of hell, in which he imagines his father suffering in hell.<sup>26</sup>

If Yasukiyo had indeed died or become a monk while his son was but a toddler, such an acute occurrence (and one which would have great impact upon the upbringing of his son) would likely have made its way into the Saigyō literature. However, there is no mention of a father in *Saigyō monogatari* or other materials. The death of Saigyō's daughter, however, does appear in one *setsuwa* source, and is the basis of another death theory. *Jikkinshō* 十訓抄 (c. 1252), a collection of anecdotes, records:

When Monk Saigyō was still a man [before becoming a monk], his beloved daughter who was three or four was terribly sick and near death. Just at that time, when he had been invited to join the retired emperor's Northern Guard in archery and other pastimes, and though against his better wishes, he was joining in the hubbub, a page came running in and whispered something in his ear, at which point someone who didn't know what was going on wouldn't have thought anything of it. Monk Saijū, when he was still a man and an imperial guard of the Genji clan, looked into Saigyō's eyes, [whereupon he] said "I was prepared for this . . ." He let no one know, but with nonchalance didn't change his demeanor even one bit. "Such a fine heart," Saijū would say later when he told people this story.<sup>27</sup>

Itō Yoshio was the first modern scholar to tie this episode to Saigyō's *shukke*, something *Jikkinshō* does not explicitly do.<sup>28</sup> Kubota Jun writes of this passage: "If this story is true, this daughter is a different person from the daughter who took the tonsure and lived at Amano. However, *Jikkinshō* is a *setsuwa* collection with a preface dated Kenchō 4 [1252]. At that time, we can certainly imagine that the legendizing [*densetsuka* 伝説化] of Saigyō was well under way. Thus it is premature to simply accept this story as straightforward fact. And yet, it would be too brash to flatly dismiss it as a fabrication."<sup>29</sup>

It is impossible to determine whether this daughter existed or not. If she did exist, and did die of illness while Saigyō was still a member of the Northern Guard, her father's grief over her death (contrary to the stoic image presented in *Jikkinshō*) may be considered part of his emo-

tional state at the time of his *shukke*. The story, however, appears in no other extant historical documents or narratives. Furthermore, though a dramatic development in the life of the young father Norikiyo, this episode nevertheless does not find its way into any biographical or legendary Saigyō literature.

## 2. Love affair theories

Interest in the Buddhist Way or the death of a loved one as the decisive factors in Saigyō's *shukke* gave way eventually to a more scandalous context. By the late Kamakura period, roughly a century after Saigyō's death, a failed love affair theory was in circulation. The military tale *Genpei jōsuiki* 源平盛衰記 (fourteenth century) is the first written account of this theory:

Now, if we inquire into the cause of Saigyō's religious awakening, the source was a love affair, I have been told. He fell in love with a high-ranking court lady one would fear to even name, but when he was told "Akogi Bay," he gave up, and thinking that rank and position are like an unfinished spring night's dream, and that pleasure and glory are as the moon setting in the west on an autumn night, he fled the attachments of the secular world and entered the Holy Way. "Akogi" is the meaning of a poem:

伊勢の海あこぎが浦に引く網も度かさなれば人もこそしれ

<i>Ise no umi</i>	At Akogi Bay
<i>Akogi ga ura ni</i>	in the Ise Sea,
<i>hiku tsuna mo</i>	if the nets are drawn
<i>tabi kasanareba</i>	too many times,
<i>hito mo koso shire</i>	someone will surely know it.

The meaning is, that in said Akogi Bay, according to a covenant with the gods, except for once a year the fish nets are not drawn in, or so they say. Having received this rebuff, Saigyō recited the following:

思ひきや富士の高根に一夜寝て雲の上なる月をみんとは

<i>omoiki ya</i>	Would I have ever conceived it?
<i>Fuji no takane ni</i>	that sleeping one night
<i>hitoyo nete</i>	on Fuji's peak,
<i>kumo no ue naru</i>	I would see the moon
<i>tsuki o min to wa</i>	above the clouds!

Judging from the meaning of this poem, they perhaps had relations for only one night. But she probably said “Akogi” because she had allowed it several times. Such a pitiful set of circumstances!<sup>30</sup>

If this story is a fabrication, it would explain why the poem cited appears nowhere in Saigyō’s corpus. Nevertheless, the possibility of his having carried on an affair with a high-ranking aristocratic lady, only to be rejected, offers a tantalizing theory for his subsequent decision to “leave it all behind.” Accordingly, it has never been completely abandoned as a possibility, and continues to find proponents. (This theory is in fact the favorite of modern popular reception.) There are two reasons the failed love affair theory has continually gained traction. First is Saigyō’s relationship to the Tokudaiji family.

Several scholars have discussed the possibility that Saigyō may have carried on an affair with a high-ranking lady of the Tokudaiji clan, as he was in the service of the Tokudaiji family from age fifteen until his tonsuring at twenty-two.<sup>31</sup> He was certainly of the age to be amorously adventurous. A liaison with Taikenmon-in 待賢門院 (1101–1145), the daughter of Saigyō’s master Tokudaiji no Saneyoshi 徳大寺実能 (1096–1157), has been suggested, though she was seventeen years his elder. It has also been suggested that Toba’s other empress consort, Bifukumon-in 美福門院 (1117–1160), who was closer in age to Saigyō, was the object of his desire. Gomi Fumihiko rejects both of these possibilities, positing instead an affair with Taikenmon-in’s daughter Jōsaimon-in 上西門院 (1126–1189).<sup>32</sup> The possibility remains that he had an affair with another female member of the Tokudaiji clan, or a lady-in-waiting in the service of a Tokudaiji daughter. However, some scholars dismiss the love affair theory as insufficient cause to take the radical step of *shukke*.<sup>33</sup>

The second most common evidence cited is Saigyō’s many love poems. Yasuda Ayao has pointed out that the number of his love poems (297) is second only to those of spring (333) and miscellaneous (312) poems, and that poems “based upon real experience comprise the majority.”<sup>34</sup> Yamaki Kōichi concurred, citing Kazamaki Keijirō, among others, and gave several poems as evidence.<sup>35</sup> Naturally, scholars have tied these “experiential” love poems to the love affair theory. Watabe Osamu cites four poems, all of which share a heightened awareness of the poet’s position, a common trait of Saigyō’s love poems also acknowledged by Yamaki.<sup>36</sup> The following is one example:

身を知れば人の咎とは思はぬに恨み顔にもぬるる袖かな

<i>mi o shireba</i>	I know my position,
<i>hito no toga to wa</i>	so I do not think
<i>omowanu ni</i>	you are to blame,
<i>uramigao ni mo</i>	and yet with a resentful look
<i>nururu sode kana</i>	my sleeves are soaked. <sup>37</sup>

This position, expressed here by *mi* 身 (self) and sometimes by *mi no hodo* 身のほど (status of self), is largely that of a social position, but can also be read as a personal position vis-à-vis the poet's relationship to the receiver of the poem. Expressions such as *mi no hodo*, *uki mi* 憂き身 (miserable self), as well as *kazu narazu* 数ならず (unworthy of being counted) are all typical indicators of self-abasement in the love poetry of the *waka* tradition.<sup>38</sup> This self-abasement is often part of an expression of displeasure stemming from the social gap between the poet and his intended lover. This is a common trope in *waka*, and not necessarily unique to Saigyō's circumstances.

The poems Watabe cites, taken as a set, do create a narrative, and other scholars have attempted to create narratives by juxtaposing particularly telling love poems. However, these are only a few of Saigyō's many love poems, and they are not compiled as a set in *Sankashū* 山家集, Saigyō's personal poetry collection. It requires the imagination of the reader with a preconceived notion of a story to make these poems cohere as a narrative. Nevertheless, we have no evidence that Saigyō meant for these poems to be part of a narrative. This does not preclude the possibility, however, that Saigyō wrote his poems with a story in mind, whether based upon actual experience or simply imagination. Certain poetic topoi in the *waka* canon can be considered narrative clusters in which an accumulation of images and associations form a paradigmatic story. For example, reference to sleeves almost always indicates tears, and in the context of a love poem often points to unfulfilled longing. In this way, a small pre-existing story that is really part of the topos of sleeves/tears can be utilized by the poet through the efficient use of conventionalized diction, whether that story reflects real experience or not.

### 3. World-weariness Theories

World-weariness, while its motivations and expressions may differ, is a universal phenomenon, driving human behavior and artistic expression in many periods and diverse regions, and may be termed generally as "dissatisfaction with secular life." Since the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the sixth century *shukke* has been a common way to express disdain of the secular world and its trappings. The reasons behind an individual's decision to take the tonsure were often disillusionment, dislike

of social circumstances, and an acceptance of the Buddhist teaching that this world is corrupt and must be renounced. Saigyō lived in an age in which *mujōkan* 無常觀, or an awareness of the mutability of human life, informed both the emotional outlook of his time and to a great extent the tenor of artistic expression. Buddhist adherents of the twelfth century believed that they lived in the age of *mappō* 末法, or the “degenerate age of the Law” (a sort of “latter days”), further adding to the gloom and pessimism of the time. It is likely that a sense of world-weariness, or disdain for what Buddhism terms the “world of passions and delusions” (*bonnō sekai* 煩惱世界), encouraged the complex and deeply-rooted sentiments that ultimately led to Saigyō’s decision. The world-weariness theory is self-evident in many of his poems which express displeasure with the “world of sorrows” (*ukiyo* 憂き世). The narrative thrust of some of these poems, especially those thought to have been composed around the time of his *shukke*, is rejection of the world of sorrows and retreat into the mountains (*tonsei* 遁世).<sup>39</sup> The following is representative:

わが宿は山のあなたにあるものを何にうきよをしらぬ心ぞ

<i>waga yado wa</i>	My dwelling
<i>yama no anata ni</i>	is beyond the mountain,
<i>aru mono o</i>	so why
<i>nani ni ukiyo o</i>	will my heart not awake
<i>shiranu kokoro zo</i>	to this wretched world? <sup>40</sup>

“Beyond the mountain” implies the Western Paradise of Amida. Saigyō is asking himself why, if he knows that his true home is in Amida’s paradise, does his heart not awake to the fact that this world is wretched and to be disdained.

It is possible to understand world-weariness as merely a symptom of a deeper cause, or anxiety, in which case Saigyō’s *ukiyo* and *uki mi* poems must be read as recognitions of a condition rather than expressions of the *cause* of that condition.<sup>41</sup> Hence, this theory may be generalized further than mere world-weariness. When *shukke* is expressed in such broad terms as a transition from secular to religious life, we are able to attribute a variety of motives to the decision to initiate such a transition. Most of the theories I describe are efforts to more narrowly define this transition by citing more specific and circumstantial causes of Saigyō’s *shukke*. For example, the love affair theory defines Saigyō’s *shukke* as something more than a move into religious life—it further circumscribes this transition as one from the sorrows of male-female relationships to a freedom from such passions. If we assume that there were no “ulterior,”

or more narrowly circumstantial, motives for Saigyō's *shukke*, we can nevertheless characterize Saigyō's reasons for becoming a monk as more multifaceted than simply an "interest in Buddhism," as Yorinaga explained. Motives that we might include under the umbrella of "dissatisfaction with secular life" are Saigyō's admiration for Buddhist recluses,<sup>42</sup> his infatuation with the "thatched-hut" life of Buddhist recluses,<sup>43</sup> dissatisfaction with his career,<sup>44</sup> the desire to live a better life,<sup>45</sup> the basic impulse to act upon a realization of the need for salvation, and the desire to be at one with nature.<sup>46</sup>

*Saigyō monogatari* was the first to express world-weariness as a factor in Saigyō's *shukke*. Yorinaga had specifically indicated why Saigyō should *not* be dissatisfied with life: he was young, rich, and happy. *Saigyō monogatari* twisted Norikiyo's youthful triumphs to its own end of illustrating the stark contrast between worldly success and spiritual fulfillment by beginning its narrative with scenes in which the young Norikiyo is lauded for his poetic abilities only to be suddenly devastated by the death of his close friend Noriyasu. Over a century later, in *Genpei jōsuiki*, the failure of worldly, or fleshly, endeavors also led to anti-worldliness.

By the Muromachi period (1333–1573), rejection of the secular world and escape into reclusion did not necessarily imply an entry into religious life. It was just as common that men who secluded themselves in thatched huts, often removed from urban centers, were fulfilling a poetic and social ideal, based upon the Chinese concept of *wenren* 文人 (Jp. *bunjin*), or literati. In Asia, displeasure with the world was a crucial ingredient in the literati tradition of men (often bureaucrats, but in Japan samurai and monks as well) who shunned public life to pursue interest in poetry and painting. As the practice of poetry became more professionalized, during the age of *renga* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the age of *haikai* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the image of Saigyō as a renouncer of secular life in fact gave way, ironically, to a more secularized image of the wandering poet. It was the persona of the eccentric traveler, utterly devoted to the landscape of Japan and his own expressions of that landscape, that influenced Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) in his reimagining of Saigyō.

Bashō is a key figure in Saigyō reception not least of all because he mimicked Saigyō's travels to the north in his most famous work *Oku no hosomichi* (1694). Bashō is representative of a transition from viewing Saigyō as primarily a religious figure whose life (and poeticizing) could be emulated as a spiritual model to seeing Saigyō as a "roving recluse" whose rejection of society was less a mark of his faith than what Steven D. Carter terms "a self-exclusion aimed at a kind of distinction that de-

rives from the authority of religious ideals and the special status accorded to those who find themselves on the margins.”<sup>47</sup> Medieval audiences were concerned with Saigyō as a religious recluse and mendicant, thus ascribing to his *shukke* motivations that were largely spiritual and faith-driven. Early modern and modern audiences seem more concerned with viewing Saigyō as, while not a professional poet, one whose rejection of court and family life for mendicancy and eremitism was a choice that facilitated a heightened artistic existence.

#### 4. *Suki* Theory

It was Mezaki Tokue’s understanding of Bashō’s project to imitate (or interpret) Saigyō’s life as a hermit and rambler poet that led to his proposal that Saigyō’s *shukke* was in fact the expression of a desire to be more exclusively devoted to literary pursuits as a quasi-professional poet. This theory has also been called the “literary theory” (*bungaku gen’in setsu* 文学原因説) because it posits that the aspiration to create literature was at the core of Saigyō’s decision to become a monk, though Mezaki claimed that he did not coin the term nor limit the theory to just literary pursuits.<sup>48</sup> *Suki* is a difficult term to translate, and so I will continue to use the Japanese original following a brief explanation. A dictionary definition would be “elegant pursuits,” but *suki* implies much more. For Kamo no Chōmei, Saigyō represented the ideal practitioner of *suki*. The language of Chōmei’s definition of *suki*, found in his *Hosshinshū* 発心集 (c. 1214), reflects his deep admiration for his predecessor, citing Saigyō’s favorite topics of the moon and cherry blossoms:

Not preferring interactions with people; not worrying about losing status; sorrowing over the scattering of cherry blossoms; contemplating the rising and setting of the moon, thereby always making one’s heart clear; and not allowing oneself to be sullied by the filth of the world—these are the important points, and thus naturally lead one to a realization of the nature of life and death and the exhausting of attachments to fame and wealth. This is the way to enter the path of true emancipation.<sup>49</sup>

The word *suki* is derived from the verb *suku* 好く, and *kanji* were assigned to the word at some later stage (数寄). In the early Heian period *suki* implied a devotion to amorous pursuits.<sup>50</sup> In the late Heian and medieval periods the term was most often applied to poetic pursuits, but could be generalized to include painting and music.<sup>51</sup> In most cases, it implied a single-minded pursuit of an art form, even to the point of eccentricity.<sup>52</sup> Chōmei defines *suki* as a “Way” comparable to religious or

professional practice, with its accomplishments being both artistic excellence and spiritual transcendence, and it was this definition of *suki* that likely informed Bashō's imagining of Saigyō's retreat from secular life.

One major current in the larger cultural phenomenon of *suki* is what Mezaki identifies as *suki no tonsei* 数寄の遁世, or "*suki* reclusion." In Japan, the literati pattern of reclusion sometimes coincided with the *shukke* pattern. One reason for this was the freedom afforded to an individual who had taken the tonsure to pursue literary or artistic aims. In becoming a nun or a monk, one who was not otherwise afforded the means or status to study and compose poetry at a level comparable to court poets was better able to poeticize, and better able to devote time and energy to elegant pursuits. It has been suggested that part or all of Saigyō's motivation for taking the tonsure was a step toward literary freedom—a freedom more sure and broad than had he remained in his somewhat restricted social position at court.<sup>53</sup> Mezaki calls Saigyō, Chōmei, Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好 (1283?–after 1352), and others *suki no tonseisha* 数寄の遁世者, or "*suki* recluses."<sup>54</sup> These were men who abandoned the world not necessarily for religious reasons, though they may have taken the tonsure or lived as Buddhist hermits, but for reasons of devotion to the arts and a desire to live in a way that frees one to completely devote oneself to a given artistic pursuit.<sup>55</sup> These he anachronistically calls *jiyūjin* 自由人 and *bunkajin* 文化人, "free men" and "men of culture," terms that reflect modern Romanticist concepts of the artist as creative genius.<sup>56</sup> These terms, however, have little to do with premodern concepts of identity, which generally differ from such highly individualistic ideas of the consciously creative self. Mezaki's discussion of *suki* reclusion is valuable in understanding how Saigyō integrated poetic and religious devotion, regardless of whether we accept that Saigyō took the tonsure in order to become a "free man of culture." This theory, which can be characterized as a collaboration between Bashō and Mezaki, also bridges premodern and modern understandings of Saigyō. *Suki* as a model for poetic practice can trace its history to the Heian period, and was also influenced by the images and poems of Chinese literati such as Dao Yuanming and the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, attributing Saigyō's *shukke* to the desire to live as a *sukisha* 数寄者 (*suki* devotee) is indicative of the tendency among modern readers to favor secular motivations over faith-based desires.

## 5. Political Theories

The political theories are another example of privileging secular circumstances over spiritual needs or sentiments. Fujioka Sakutarō (1870–1910) is the source of the first political theory. In his *Saigyō-ron*, Fujioka pos-

ited that Saigyō, by becoming a monk, may have wished to escape what he deemed a politically poisonous and possibly unstable situation surrounding court succession disputes at the time.<sup>58</sup> As he points out, one year previous to Saigyō's *shukke* the setting was already in place for the imperial succession struggle that erupted upon the death of Toba in 1156 and became known as the Hōgen Uprising 保元の乱.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Saigyō was closely aligned with the Taikenmon-in/Sutoku losing side of the imperial succession dispute due to his relationship with the Tokudaiji family and friendship with Sutoku.

Perhaps the astute Norikiyo saw the writing on the wall and relinquished both his position at court (such as it was) and his involvement in what seemed to him a petty and painful power struggle. Yasuda Ayao wrote that "it is possible to think that sympathy for Sutoku was one reason for Saigyō's *shukke*."<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, Saigyō took the tonsure two years before Sutoku relinquished the throne to Konoe, and sixteen years before the succession dispute became an armed rebellion. The possibility remains that Saigyō was disillusioned by court life and what he may have perceived as petty disputes, but to conjecture that he left court before his "side" of the conflict was routed is to ascribe to him remarkable prescience.

A related issue is career advancement and its effects on Saigyō's decision to leave court to become a monk. Gomi Fumihiko has conjectured that an anecdote from Kamo no Chōmei's *Hosshinshū* recounting the advancement of a younger brother over his elder brother, leading to the elder's *shukke*, is related somehow to Saigyō.<sup>61</sup> Yamaguchi Makoto further nuances this argument by looking closely at variants of *Saigyō monogatari* that include Norikiyo's refusal of rank advancement and contemporary documents concerning rank advancement and Toba's court.<sup>62</sup> It is possible that dissatisfaction with some aspect of career advancement, either the failure to advance or the wish to avoid a career advancement that would further entangle the young Norikiyo or prevent him from seeking his religious desires, may have been a direct or indirect cause of his decision to take the tonsure. Such a theory bridges both politics and world-weariness, as either disappointment in his career or disgust at court intrigues might have led Norikiyo to despise secular life.

## 6. Family Estate Theory

This theory, as well, identifies a catalyst for the welling up of world-weariness that may have driven Norikiyo to abandon career and family. In his 2005 book *Saigyō no tabiji*, essayist Okada Kishū cites, like many before him, a number of posited motivations behind Saigyō's *shukke*, including dissatisfaction with secular life and career, the desire to devote

himself to poetry, and a failed love affair. One startling assertion stands out in Okada's analysis as unique—that Saigyō wished to shirk his responsibilities toward the troublesome family estate in Kii province (present-day Wakayama prefecture). To my knowledge, no other writer has tied Saigyō's tonsuring to the family estate, Tanaka-shō 田中庄. Hence, this is the most recently developed *shukke* theory.

The Satō were the administrators of the Tanaka estate (*azukaridokoro* 預所), which was held by the Sekkanke 撰闕家, or Regental branch of the Fujiwara clan. The neighboring Arakawa estate 荒川庄 was held by Retired Emperor Toba (Norikiyo's liege from age eighteen to twenty two) from around the time Norikiyo was eleven. He eventually passed the estate to his consort Bifukumon-in, who in turn passed it to the Shingon establishment at Mt. Kōya. When Toba acquired the Arakawa estate in 1129, he ordered a survey of its boundaries, which seems to have been the beginning of a long series of disputes between the administrators of the estate and the Satō family. Saigyō's brother Nakakiyo and nephew Yoshikiyo 能清 both led armed invasions of neighboring estates in order to establish military dominance in the disputes. Okada posits that Norikiyo would have been forced into a position of conflict with his own sovereign, and "having become aware of his position of eldest son, the maintenance of the 'hometown' estate became a burden. He felt he wanted to pass the matter of the estate to his younger brother Nakakiyo. We cannot deny that this was one motivation for his *shukke*."<sup>63</sup>

Okada relies exclusively on Mezaki Tokue's discussion of border disputes and armed conflicts at Tanaka-shō.<sup>64</sup> Mezaki rallies a significant number of documentary sources to flesh out the story of the border disputes, many from temple archives at Mt. Kōya. Not once, however, does Mezaki tie the troubled history of the Tanaka estate to Saigyō's tonsuring. Rather, Mezaki uses the estate's complicated history to demonstrate the intricate personal and professional ties that Saigyō held with a number of individuals and families; he also discusses the estate in order to verify the Satō's wealth, especially as a possible means of financial support to Saigyō after his *shukke*. Mezaki frames his entire discussion of the Tanaka estate and its component issues, such as Tokudaiji, court, Taira, and Kōya relationships, as an inquiry into what Norikiyo might have done had he not become Saigyō. Okada, on the other hand, describes the estate and its tribulations as "fetters" that Norikiyo wished to cast off, characterizing the issue as a family problem that would impede his desire to become a monk and poet.<sup>65</sup>

This theory is recent, but is nevertheless tied to others in its interpretation of Saigyō's circumstances and personality. Like the world-weariness theory, Okada's account implies dissatisfaction with secular

affairs, especially complex interpersonal and professional associations. His analysis also meshes with the *suki* theory in assuming that Saigyō wished to evade secular and family duties in order to live and poeticize in an unencumbered manner. Further, like Fujioka's political theory, Okada points out that the entanglements of court relationships, conflicts of interests, and political machinations could have contributed to Saigyō's desire to abandon any connections to both court and family business.

## 7. Homosexuality Theories

The poet and critic Matsunaga Goichi speculates that the real reason Norikiyo became dismayed with secular life, especially court life, was not political or familial, but sexual. He argues that Norikiyo proactively avoided rank advancement by taking the tonsure in order to end a homosexual relationship with Retired Emperor Toba.<sup>66</sup> Some modern scholars, Mezaki Tokue especially, while not suggesting that he had a sexual relationship with his sovereign, have suggested that Saigyō may have left his post as a member of the Northern Guard to avoid the vogue of male-male sexuality in Toba's court circle.<sup>67</sup> Research into male-male sexual relationships among courtiers and warriors of the Insei period 院政期 (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) has been carried out by a number of scholars,<sup>68</sup> making it possible to situate Saigyō in such a context even though there are no premodern documents that directly address Saigyō's sexuality.

The most important document concerning Toba's court at the time is Fujiwara no Yorinaga's diary *Taiki*, already cited as a source of information regarding Saigyō's *shukke*. Yorinaga refers to sexual relationships with several men, including Tokudaiji no Kin'yoshi 徳大寺公能 (1115–1161) and Fujiwara no Iekira 藤原家明 (c. 1130–?). Kin'yoshi was the son of Saigyō's master Tokudaiji no Saneyoshi, whom he served from age fifteen, the brother of Taikenmon-in and an associate of Saigyō.<sup>69</sup> Iekira was the same Iekira who married the sister of Hamuro Reisendonō 葉室冷泉殿, the stepmother (or foster mother) of Saigyō's daughter after the tonsuring of her parents, as recounted in Kamo no Chōmei's *Hosshinshū*.<sup>70</sup> Men who engaged in sexual activity with other men while maintaining heterosexual relationships with spouses and other women were certainly within Saigyō's social group.

Mezaki writes: "On the unseen side of aristocratic society of the Insei period, there was a strong and pervasive vogue of male-male sexuality."<sup>71</sup> It is unclear how "unseen" or hidden male-male sexuality was at the time, but it is clear that men with whom Saigyō associated were part of the "vogue" Mezaki describes. The point Mezaki wishes to make is

that Saigyō, who surely would have been aware of the relationships around him even if he was not a participant, may have been dismayed by what Mezaki and others have characterized as a decadent environment, suggesting that Saigyō's aversion to male-male sexuality could have been a motivating factor in his *shukke*.<sup>72</sup> However, as I have discussed elsewhere, this stance assumes that Saigyō considered male-male sexuality to be a "secret," "barren," and "decadent" phenomenon. Such terminology, rather than descriptive of an historical context, betrays modern homophobia.<sup>73</sup> Although some in court circles of the time were averse to Toba's male-male sexual coterie, it is just as likely that Saigyō held the opposite opinion and was an active participant. The bifurcated nature of modern views of male-male sexuality informs the assertions of modern Saigyō scholarship that he must have either been homosexual (according to Matsunaga) or homophobic (according to Mezaki).

Like the love affair theory, a theory that implies Saigyō was sexually involved with other men is inherently scandalous to cultures and individuals that find sexuality and priesthood incompatible. Hence it continues to garner interest. William R. LaFleur, in his treatment of Saigyō's *shukke*, seems to favor the homophobic theory, though he introduces other possibilities as well, including a failed love affair with Taikenmon-in.<sup>74</sup> Satō Masahide suggests that the failed love affair was in fact with Satō Noriyasu (the failure of the affair being due to his death), thereby combining three theories.<sup>75</sup> His only evidence for such a claim, aside from *Genpei jōsuiki* and *Saigyō monogatari*, is a single poem:

世をのがれけるをり、ゆかりありける人のもとへいひおくりける

*yo o nogarekeru ori, yukari arikeru hito no moto e iiokurikeru*  
Sent when I shunned the world to someone who had ties to me

世の中を背きはてぬと言ひおかむ思ひ知るべき人はなくとも

<i>yo no naka o</i>	I shall declare
<i>somuki hatenu to</i>	I have completely
<i>iiokamu</i>	turned my back on the world,
<i>omoishiru beki</i>	though there be no one
<i>hito wa naku to mo</i>	who may understand why. <sup>76</sup>

Satō comments: "Saigyō writes that 'there is no one who may understand' his absolute desire. His handsome young man had suddenly died."<sup>77</sup> Matsunaga Goichi cites the following poem composed on the occasion of

Toba's funeral as evidence that Saigyō had been sexually involved with his sovereign:<sup>78</sup>

今宵こそ思ひ知らるれ浅からぬ君に契りのある身なりけり

<i>koyoi koso</i>	This night
<i>omoi shirarure</i>	I cannot help but realize
<i>asakaranu</i>	that I am one
<i>kimi ni chigiri no</i>	bonded to milord
<i>aru mi narikeri</i>	in no shallow way! <sup>79</sup>

Poetry is marshaled and interpreted to support a theory—in this case single poems whose biographical elements are obvious and yet altogether vague. Like many other readers, Satō and Matsunaga supply the specifics of context which Saigyō left out.<sup>80</sup>

## 8. General Theory

The general theory allows us to accept that many factors, including perhaps factors unknown to us, influenced Saigyō's decision to become a monk. If only there was some conclusive evidence, perhaps in the form of a long-lost diary, indicating the exact reasons behind his *shukke*, but Saigyō's silence is deafening. Not once does he ever mention exactly when or where he took the tonsure. *Saigyō monogatari* simply states that he received the rites at the dwelling of a "holy man" in the Saga area west of the capital. Such vagueness plagues the biography of Saigyō even beyond his tonsuring.

Mezaki Tokue refused to accept the general theory, as first proposed by Kawada Jun, claiming that it is "no different than calling the cause unclear."<sup>81</sup> Most scholars have built some sort of outline for Saigyō's *shukke* that favors one or more theories. Oyama Tokujirō claimed that Saigyō had to have been more concerned by the infighting of the Fujiwara and the court as well as the ominous natural disasters of the day than a petty love affair.<sup>82</sup> Itō Yoshio, on the other hand, claimed that Saigyō's response to the movements of society could not have been the main cause, but that his painful personal problems and admiration for Buddhist recluses formed the basis for his decision, which was then spurred on by the death of his daughter.<sup>83</sup> Kubota Shōichirō recognized that Saigyō likely harbored complex motivations, succinctly characterized by the two major areas of endeavor following his *shukke*: Buddhist practice and poetic composition, writing that "*shukke* was the seeking of a valuable way of life in making oneself free, setting oneself free from restraints, fulfilling the self, and setting the self free." Kubota goes on to

explain that such a “setting free” was not the *reason* (*gen'in* 原因) for Saigyō's *shukke*, but something that was gained *through* the act.<sup>84</sup>

Kawada Jun categorized the various possible reasons for Saigyō's *shukke* as “distant, or underlying, causes” (*en'in* 遠因), such as politics and world-weariness, and “close, or immediate, causes” (*kin'in* 近因), such as a failed love affair.<sup>85</sup> We may also make a distinction between outer (*gaiteki* 外的) and inner (*naiteki* 内的) causes, or, as William R. LaFleur has expressed, *catalysts* versus *causes*.<sup>86</sup> Whatever the outer causes may have been—and I have discussed several, such as politics, death, and relationships, these outer causes are only informative as possible influences on the inner workings of Saigyō's heart, which, as Kubota Shōichirō points out, are impossible for us to know with certainty. The aim of this treatment of Saigyō's *shukke*, though not conclusive as a statement of position in the debate over Saigyō's reasons for becoming a monk, has been to provide a more comprehensive and clear picture of the historical sources of the debate as well as the intimate relationship between Saigyō's own poetry and the stories of his *shukke*.

### What the *Shukke* Theories Can Tell Us

We are able to extract from these theories valuable information about the concerns of specific times, persons, and cultural groups by paying attention to what is revealed in their unique refashionings of the “Saigyō Persona.” The world-weariness theory may be understood generally as a recognition of the basic impulse to live a more religious life separate from secular life, considered illusory and corrupt by Buddhist believers of the time. In this sense, it does not matter necessarily what specific aspects of society or of his own life Norikiyo found dissatisfying. Rather, he can be seen as one of many of the late Heian period individuals who expressed their religious faith through renunciation. Placing Saigyō in this context was perhaps instinctive for his earliest audiences, who saw their age as degenerate and in decline. The poems that *Saigyō monogatari* and other sources cite in conjunction with his *shukke* tend to express an awareness of *mujō* and a desire to renounce the world.<sup>87</sup>

The urge to find a more “interesting” cause was quickly manifest, however, in the death and love affair theories. These theories not only reveal that some of Saigyō's readers needed something more exciting and plausible to explain his *shukke*; they also tell us about shifting expectations and modes of understanding the past. For example, the first written evidence of the failed love affair theory is *Genpei jōsuiki*, a record of the Genpei War (1180–1185) very similar in content to *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (thirteenth century). Both tales recount the rise and fall of the Taira clan and are generically diverse, borrowing from oral story-

telling, military records, anecdotes, poem tales, romances, and *hosshintan*. Both are very concerned with notions of *gekokujō* 下克上, or “junior supplanting seniors,” as well as warriors insinuating themselves into court politics, imperial succession, and the sexual lives of aristocratic women. A common thread is the clash of the military and aristocratic classes in these arenas and the ensuing tragedy. A few patterns emerge in expressing the tragic results of warrior involvement in the politics (both governmental and sexual) of the court: death, exile, and *shukke*. As for Saigyō’s involvement with a lady far above his station, in the context of the Taira story, is it any wonder this clash of social classes led to *shukke*?<sup>88</sup> The structure of this short anecdote in *Genpei jōsuiki* echoes the overall narrative thrust of the tale as well as the standard mode, in the Kamakura period, of understanding and interpreting the rise and fall of the Taira.<sup>89</sup>

The supposed death of Norikiyo’s best friend Noriyasu is another attempt to package Saigyō’s tonsuring according to contemporary modes of understanding and narrating religious awakening. In this case, his story becomes a typical *hosshintan*, as explained earlier. Furthermore, Noriyasu fits the pattern of a *zenchishiki* 善知識 (Skt. kalyāna-mitra), a “good friend” who guides the believer toward enlightenment and acceptance of the precepts.<sup>90</sup> The idea and practice of *zenchishiki* was very important in Pure Land Buddhism (*Jōdoshū* 浄土宗) of the Kamakura period, the major sects of which developed toward the end of Saigyō’s lifetime.<sup>91</sup>

The founder of the Pure Land Buddhist Time Sect (*Jishū* 時宗), Ippen 一遍 (1234–1289), was known as a *sute-hijiri* 捨聖, or “holy man of renunciation,” because of his insistence on tossing away the trappings of secular life in order to devote oneself to *nenbutsu* practice. He also admired Saigyō’s poetry and reputation as a peripatetic monk and prominent “renouncer” (*tonseisha*), writing his own poems and visiting sites known to have been visited by Saigyō. His affinity for Saigyō was not lost on his followers, and it is thought that the origins of some versions of *Saigyō monogatari*, and the dissemination of the tale in the Kamakura period, were the work of itinerant monks of the *Jishū* sect.<sup>92</sup> In an effort to echo their own founder’s emphasis on renunciation and itinerancy, *nenbutsu-hijiri* 念仏聖 (“Nenbutsu Holy Men”) transformed the Saigyō tale to fit their own ideals. In their version, Saigyō is spurred by the death of his *zenchishiki* (Noriyasu), with whom he had discussed at length the Buddhist Way and the futility of secular life, to toss away his career in order to become a wandering monk. He then sets out on various devotional travels, composing poetry along the way. This pattern then mirrors and anticipates (retroactively) that of Ippen, especially the Ippen of *Ippen*

*hijiri-e* 一遍聖絵 (1299), an illustrated narrative handscroll that depicts the “Holy Man of Renunciation” visiting various famous places (*meisho* 名所) around Japan, spreading his *nenbutsu* practices and composing poems.<sup>93</sup> In this case, the “Saigyō Persona” was molded into a didactic model which reflected the “Ippen Persona” as part of the larger discursive format of proselytizing.<sup>94</sup>

Saigyō’s life was also transformed by *Saigyō monogatari* into a life worthy of emulation by implicit connections between the story of his life and that of Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, whose own *shukke* was startling for its lack of cause—he too was young, wealthy, and happy. It was also perhaps specifically meant to provide religious models worthy of emulation by women, as Gustav Heldt argues. Much of the emulation of Saigyō’s religious reclusion and travel during the medieval period was carried out by women and nuns, making them important brokers of the “Saigyō Persona.”<sup>95</sup>

Didactic purposes were also at work in the account of the death of Saigyō’s daughter in *Jikkishō*, which was a text used to provide young samurai with stalwart examples from the past.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, the emphasis is on Norikiyo’s devotion to his post, not necessarily his grief and subsequent renunciation. Nevertheless, modern scholarship has asserted that if the account is true we cannot dismiss his grief as unrelated to his *shukke*. This theory, then, like the *suki* theory, is a collaboration between premodern and modern readers. The account of another more prominent daughter of Saigyō will help us to more fully understand the divergent approaches of premodern and modern readers in the case of the dead daughter theory. This other daughter appears in *Saigyō monogatari*. It is unclear whether this daughter actually existed. She may be the daughter to which Kamo no Chōmei refers in his *Hosshinshū*.<sup>97</sup> Encouraged by her father (who in Chōmei’s account fits the role of a *zenchishiki*), she later takes the tonsure and becomes a nun, joining her mother, who had already become a nun, in reclusion at Amano, a popular area for nun recluses near Mt. Kōya. According to *Saigyō monogatari*, she was approximately four years old when one day her father returned from court in order to inform his wife of his resolve to become a monk (after the death of Noriyasu). The emotionally distraught Norikiyo, torn between his familial obligations and his desire to become a monk, decides that his daughter represents the very ties that have prevented him from acting on his desire to become a monk and mercilessly kicks her from the veranda when she runs out to greet him.

In the stories of both daughters, the parent-child relationship represents a barrier to proper behavior. *Jikkishō* emphasizes the steadfastness of a samurai even when faced with fatherly grief. *Saigyō monogatari*

emphasizes the resolve of a renouncer even when faced with the expectations of a loving child. In either case, personal circumstances and fatherly affections are sacrificed to a larger social and religious ideal. Conversely, the modern interpretation of the *Jikkinshō* episode emphasizes what twentieth-century scholars assume must have been happening in Norikiyo's heart despite his adamant exterior. It demonstrates the modern impulse to humanize Saigyō, which is in opposition to the hagiographic impulse of many premodern renderings of Saigyō's *shukke*.<sup>98</sup> As William R. LaFleur has pointed out, the probable fabrication of the daughter in *Saigyō monogatari* was likely done in an effort to "form connections between Saigyō and Shakyamuni," the historical Buddha whose own son played a similar role in his *shukke*.<sup>99</sup> The hagiographic approach of *Saigyō monogatari* led to his *shukke* story being re-fitted to reflect *hosshintan*, the life of the historical Buddha, and the lives and preaching of Pure Land Buddhist figures of the Kamakura period.

Although modern theories tend to steer away from hagiographic readings of Saigyō, these theories are nonetheless revealing as windows into the concerns and ideals of their proponents. The political theory, first advanced by Fujioka Sakutarō in 1906, is a product of the Meiji period (1868–1912), a time in which shogunal rule by a hereditary military leader gave way to the restoration of direct rule by a sovereign, making imperial succession and court politics more important, and of greater concern to the Japanese populace, than they had been in many centuries. It is not surprising that Meiji-period scholars would wish to reevaluate Saigyō's *shukke* in the context of imperial succession and aristocratic politics, as these were very contemporary areas of interest. Furthermore, the burgeoning fields of "national literature" (*kokubungaku* 国文学) and "national history" (*kokushi* 国史), both in education and scholarly inquiry, encouraged re-examination of the past in order to create new literary and socio-political histories. These new histories, as Haruo Shirane points out, were "closely related to modern notions of national language and identity," and therefore reflected modern efforts to reinterpret the national past in order to define the national present.<sup>100</sup> Scholars such as Fujioka, Sasaki Nobutsuna, and Kubota Utsubo reinterpreted Saigyō's poetry and *shukke* in a manner that reflected recognizably modern concerns. Moreover, their fascination with Saigyō's renunciation seems to reflect personal points of interest vis-à-vis their position as intellectual elites in a decidedly militaristic and neo-imperialist society.

Fujioka, Sasaki, and Kubota, among others of their time, may be considered modern *bunjin*, or literati. The traditional description of a *bunjin* as a literary and artistic dilettante not always in favor with the ruling regime, nor favorably inclined toward that regime, was revived in the

early twentieth century and became even more prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s as Japan became increasingly nationalistic and xenophobic. The *bunjin* model often merged at this time with the newly-formed identity of the *kokubungakusha* 国文学者, or “scholar of Japanese letters.” At a time when Japan’s imperial ambitions lead to wars and socio-political climates were often volatile, Fujioka and other *kokubungakusha* found in Saigyō a figure which to them merged the *bunjin* model with the *shukke* pattern of renunciation.<sup>101</sup> In their reading, Saigyō was a deeply-entrenched member of the military class involved in the volatile political world of his time who became disgusted by the pettiness of political machinations, including imperial succession disputes, choosing instead the path of a poet who, like literati of China and Japan, lived and wrote on the fringe of society. It is not difficult to imagine that perhaps the early-twentieth-century *kokubungakusha* saw a little of themselves in Saigyō.<sup>102</sup>

Premodern readers generally read Saigyō’s poems in an effort to emulate his poetic style or his monkly life (sometimes both). Modern scholars emphasize how to read and interpret the poems as objects of literary analysis, but still employ the poems as a way to “read,” or imagine Saigyō. How is this different from the program of premodern readers—those who created *Saigyō monogatari*, *Senjūshō*, *Saigyō-zakura* 西行桜,<sup>103</sup> and countless other representations of Saigyō? Some general distinctions between premodern and modern reception can be made concerning the *shukke* theories, though theories with premodern origins are still upheld and expanded by modern writers, and theories developed in the modern era generally appeal to premodern contexts for their validity.

The first four theories, or groups of theories (death, love affair, world-weariness, *suki*) have their origins in premodern culture, especially anecdotal sources and reception by later poets.<sup>104</sup> The last four theories (family estate, political, homosexuality, and general) have their origins in the modern era, especially scholarly discourse. In general, the premodern theories attempt to describe Saigyō’s spiritual journey toward *shukke* by providing contexts in which the young Norikiyo is faced with disappointments that lead to an understanding of the mutability of life (*mujō*). This understanding (possibly in tandem with a traumatic event as a catalyst) prompted a renunciation of secular life. In general, the modern theories attempt to explain Saigyō’s journey toward *shukke* by appealing to potential circumstances that would counter, or overrule, the basic assumption of premodern audiences—that Saigyō understood the mutability of human existence and accordingly acted on his desire to live a religious life.

In premodern theories, the core of Saigyō's *shukke* experience—religious awakening—is not altered. Rather, these theories provide a more detailed context by which the reader can better understand the catalyst(s) that impelled Saigyō to enter religious life. By contrast, modern theories tend to attempt not further contextualization but *recontextualization* by offering *alternative* narratives. It seems that there is an unease among many modern scholars that prevents them from accepting Saigyō's religiosity as a given not needful of justification or explication. Even when discussing the world-weariness theory, modern scholars have endeavored to qualify Saigyō's religiosity by offering what I can only call "sub-theories" that complicate what otherwise might be described as Saigyō's straightforward desire to seek salvation through priesthood (the tacit assumption of Yorinaga's diary entry). The secular nature of modern societies, and specifically modern scholarly endeavor, may account for this aversion to the "religious awakening" narrative that runs through all of the premodern theories. The family estate, political, homosexuality, and *suki* theories all, to one degree or another, attempt to circumvent the *hosshin* narrative at the core of the premodern theories, preferring explanations that neither rely upon nor necessarily lead directly to a religious awakening as the nucleus of Saigyō's *shukke*. These theories do lead to renunciation, but renunciation as an *escape* from an unpleasant or unsatisfactory situation rather than renunciation as an *embracing* of a religious life.

The approach of American scholar William R. LaFleur is one exception in English-language scholarship. He cites and accepts a number of factors, including those I have described as uniquely modern, but does not deny the core religious aspects of Saigyō's renunciation. However, LaFleur was a Buddhologist, trained at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and whatever literary analysis he undertook in his scholarship of Saigyō was always aimed at uncovering the spiritual experience. The majority of Saigyō scholarship in Japan is carried out by literary historians (those in the field of *kokubungaku*), especially *waka* specialists. While much has been written by *waka* and Buddhism scholars about Saigyō's poetry and religious practice, in treatments of his *shukke* the trend has been toward secularizing the story, circumventing Saigyō's religiosity; and, when treating the relationship between Buddhism and his poetry, analyses have tended to remain at the level of expressive modes and poem-sutra intertextuality. The divide between the studies of religion, or faith, and literature, nevertheless, is narrowing in the West and Japan, and Saigyō represents a golden opportunity to further integrate what have traditionally been distantly related fields of inquiry.

I have enumerated some distinctions between the way premodern audiences imagined Saigyō and the way modern audiences read Saigyō, but there is one important similarity that must be emphasized. No matter the approach to Saigyō's *shukke* and no matter what time or culture influenced that approach, the tendency to use his poetry to flesh out versions of the "Saigyō Persona" persists in all periods and across all fields of cultural production, from *setsuwa* to *otogizōshi* to noh plays to academic discourse. For example, *Saigyō monogatari* was interested in reconstructing the *shukke* as a critical event in a cohesive and convincing narrative of an exemplary religious and poetic life, from awakening (*hosshin*) through religious practices and travel (*shugyō* 修行) to miraculous death (*ōjō* 往生), and utilized his poems to that end alone. There are many insightful and careful studies of Saigyō's poetry in the modern era, yet when it comes to analyses of Saigyō's *shukke*, scholars have utilized his poems in the same fashion as *Saigyō monogatari*, to "re-tell the story." Shimonishi Zenzaburō goes so far as to label twentieth-century scholarly treatments of poetry surrounding Saigyō's *shukke* "*monogatari*."<sup>105</sup> Kawada Jun ended his monograph *Saigyō* with an extensive list of poems (more than 500) that are dated, contain biographical information in their content or prefaces, or can be inferred as biographical, creating a "poetic biographical sketch."<sup>106</sup> In two separate chapters on Saigyō's *shukke* in his *Kajin Saigyō: seikatsu to uta*, Kubota Shōichirō cited only one documentary source (Yorinaga's diary *Taiki*), preferring instead to reconstruct the event almost exclusively from poems, of which he cites thirty-three.<sup>107</sup> Recently, essayist Matsumoto Akio, in his *Saigyō: sono uta sono shōgai*, built a full-scale biography on a framework of poems arranged, supposedly, in chronological order.<sup>108</sup> We can categorize nearly all efforts to reconstruct Saigyō's *shukke* as "narrative," thereby leveling the field of reception and overcoming the divide between cultural discourse and scholarly discourse in the construction of the "Saigyō Persona."

Furthermore, modern popular constructions of Saigyō can be at some times indistinguishable in approach from premodern reception. Novels such as Setouchi Jakuchō's *Byakudō*,<sup>109</sup> Arashiyama Kōzaburō's *Saigyō to Kiyomori*, Tsuji Kunio's *Saigyō kaden*, Kotani Kyōsuke's *Saigyō densetsu satsujin jiken*, Nagao Uka's *Saigyō hōshi hokukōshō*, and Mita Masahiro's *Saigyō tsuki ni koi suru* and *Ashura no Saigyō*, to name a few, are writerly reimaginings of Saigyō akin to premodern narratives.<sup>110</sup> If we delve even further into the realm of contemporary pop culture we find Saigyōji Yuyuko 西行寺幽々子, a sexy thousand-year-old ghost character in the fantasy-violence serial video game *Tōhō Purojekuto*.<sup>111</sup> She is the daughter of Saigyō and is connected to the "Saigyō *ayakashi*" 西行妖, a

spectral cherry tree reminiscent of the cherry tree whose spirit speaks with Saigyō in Zeami's famous noh play *Saigyō-zakura*. In these novels and games, Saigyō is re-conceptualized according to one or more of the *shukke* theories, or his popular images and poems are co-opted into a contemporary narrative. These narrative patterns resonate with *Senjūshō*, *Saigyō monogatari*, various Saigyō-related noh plays of the medieval period,<sup>112</sup> and Saigyō-related *jōruri* of the Edo period (1600–1868).<sup>113</sup>

We might assume that the “Saigyō Persona” arose organically from his poems, many of which are revealing of an internal emotional struggle and seem to be part of an overarching personal narrative. This may be true in the earliest period of Saigyō reception, as his readers combed through his poems and were happy to find a number of narrative threads, or clusters of concern, designed by the poet himself. Many of his poems do indeed contribute directly to one or another aspect of the “Saigyō Persona,” and we must consider Saigyō himself to have been the earliest architect of the *Saigyōzō*. William R. LaFleur argues that he “to some degree *self-structured* his life.”<sup>114</sup> I would emphasize that this “life” is the life *as expressed in his poems*. My analysis shows that the images of Saigyō that have been constructed over the centuries, even from very soon after his death and as recently as the last decade, are products of an inverse process in which the image is first created, often in an effort to fit Saigyō into a pre-existing pattern or model (such as a *suki no tonseisha* or *bunjin*), then confirmed or supported by appeal to poems, a process Shimonishi calls “applying heat in order to read invisible writing” (*aburidashi* 炙り出し).<sup>115</sup> The sometimes obscure and difficult-to-define spaces in which configurations of Saigyō have been created are thus in-between spaces—fields of corroboration and collaboration in which contemporary mores, ideals, and interests negotiate with the historical figure of Saigyō and his poems to produce something old and something new.

As my archeology of *shukke* reception has shown, elements of Saigyō's life have attracted audiences across all periods. And, when this interest intersects with a poetic oeuvre that tends toward introspection and autobiography, it is natural that his readers “dig around” in his poems for clues that complete, at least in their minds, the story or context they long for and expect.<sup>116</sup> More specifically, a rhetorical stance Saigyō commonly adopted, especially in poems about renunciation and Buddhist practice (*shugyō*), contributes directly to biographical readings of his poems. All *waka* are events that require an understanding of social environments and participants in their “performance.”<sup>117</sup> Hence, they must be understood by their contexts, though these might shift from, for example, an original context as a personal exchange, to the context of a seasonal sequence within an anthology, to a narrative context within a tale or an-

ecdote. The difference between reading *waka* contextually and what happens with Saigyō's poems, especially those concerning his tonsuring, *shugyō*, and internal conflicts, is that the contextual reading of a Saigyō poem so easily becomes psychoanalysis and narrative precisely because the poet has staged an ambivalent position vis-à-vis leaving the world and yet remaining attached to it. The following poem is one example:

花にそむ心のいかで残りけむ捨てはててきと思ふわが身に

<i>hana ni somu</i>	Why should my heart
<i>kokoro no ika de</i>	remain stained
<i>nokori kemu</i>	by blossoms?
<i>sute hatete ki to</i>	when I thought
<i>omou waga mi ni</i>	I had tossed all that away . . . <sup>118</sup>

The poet's equivocation toward his position or identity (*waga mi* 我が身) as a renouncer invites narrative contextualization.

Saigyō's concern with his spiritual state and relationships to both the secular world and the world of nature find repeated expression in his poems, quite often in the form of questions and doubts about his "self" or "identity" (*mi* 身), his "thoughts" or "feelings" (*omoi* 思), and his "heart" or "mind" (*kokoro* 心). Words such as *mi* and *omoi* were primarily used in love poetry (as discussed earlier), but by the end of the Heian period expressions such as *mi*, *waga mi*, *mi no hodo*, *uki mi*, and *kazu narazu* became popular in poems expressing renunciation, lament, and anti-worldliness.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, whereas *omoi* most often implied thoughts of love or longing in poetry of the Heian period, Saigyō employed the word to also mean spiritual desires, dilemmas, or contemplations. This leads readers to interpret his poems not just as iterations of the shared *topoi* and diction of the *waka* canon, but as highly personal expressions of self-exploration. Furthermore, as Gustav Heldt argues, "the reaction of readers to the tale [of Saigyō] over the centuries indicates that they, male and female, religious and lay people alike, identified deeply with its portrayal of the protagonist's emotional state as he grapples with his lingering attachment to people and places."<sup>120</sup> Reading a *waka* implies reading the poetics as well as the context(s). Reading a poet (the most common mode of reading in Saigyō reception) implies sometimes ignoring the poetics, privileging the context, and exploiting the context to build an image of the poet's psyche, emotional state, or personal experience. Readers' identification with this image of the poet can in turn lead to that image re-

fracturing the reader's own identity or concerns, "the textual figure of Saigyō" becoming a "matrix for the self-figurings of the readers."<sup>121</sup>

The mist that shrouded the empty sky of his heart so long ago persists in hiding from our view what we might call "the real story," and this enduring mystery has prompted readers to create narratives out of Saigyō's poems. When we dig around in his poems looking for evidence of preconceived biographical details, we turn the poems into shards that, when glued together, form the vessel into which we can pour our expectations.<sup>122</sup> This trend has been a part of Saigyō reception from the very start, and is not likely to go away. Nor is this trend undesirable, for, Heldt writes, "we gain most from reading [*Saigyō monogatari*] as a palimpsest of the emotional, religious, and poetic concerns that Japanese of various periods brought to their image of Saigyō."<sup>123</sup> The remarkably complex figure of Saigyō, who was a samurai, a father and husband, a loyal retainer and friend to emperors, a wandering monk, an able Buddhist authority, an accomplished poet, and a great story-teller, has converged irrevocably with the reception of his poetry to produce the "Saigyō Persona." Fortunately for us, this "Saigyō" and his extraordinary poems remain elusive, infinitely malleable, and forever tantalizing.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Sankashū* 786 [723]. Saigyō's poems are first cited with a number from Watanabe Tamotsu, ed., *Sankashū zenchūkai* (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 1979), the most comprehensive and inclusive one-volume version of not only *Sankashū*

but *Kikigakishū* 聞書集 and *Zanshū* 殘集 as well as poems gleaned from other sources. Numbers in brackets refer to the *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* version of *Sankashū* edited by Kazamaki Keijirō and Kojima Yoshio (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1965). These numbers also correspond to the *Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei* version of *Sankashū* edited by Gotō Shigeo (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1982) as well as the most recently published annotated version of *Sankashū, Kikigakishū, Zanshū*, edited by Nishizawa Yoshihito, Utsugi Genkō, and Kubota Jun (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> See Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Sonpi bunmyaku*, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai Sonpi Bunmyaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1977), p. 391; Miki Sumito, ed. *Hōjōki, Hosshinshū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976), p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> They were elite as a group by virtue of their proximity to emperors. As individuals the Northern Guard were generally of the fifth rank or lower.

<sup>4</sup> The term also refers to the “Burning House” parable in the third fascicle of the *Lotus Sutra*, in which escaping a burning house is likened to achieving salvation. A typical tonsuring would include cutting one’s hair and/or shaving one’s head, receiving ordination rites, receiving the precepts, and donning monk’s or nun’s robes. *Shukke* also necessarily included a renunciation of home, family, and career, though there was a wide spectrum of *shukke* that existed in practice in premodern Japan, some adherents even continuing to function in home, family, and career with little changed from pre-tonsure life.

<sup>5</sup> See my “So Deep in the Mountains: Saigyō’s *Yama fukami* Poems and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Poetry” (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* Vol. 68 No. 2, pp. 33–75) for a discussion of how Saigyō’s groundbreaking poetic style enriched and expanded certain tropes and their associated lexicons within *waka*.

<sup>6</sup> *Sankashū* 88 [77].

<sup>7</sup> Gustav Heldt, “Saigyō’s Traveling Tale: A Translation of *Saigyō monogatari*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 4 (1997), pp. 467, 474–75. See also William R. LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall: The Life, Times, and Poetry of Saigyō* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003), pp. 15–19; LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō: The Genesis of a Buddhist Sacred Biography,” in *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), pp. 344–53.

<sup>8</sup> According to the late-thirteenth-century court history *Hyakurenshō*, Saigyō took the tonsure on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of Hōen 保延 6. Kuroita Katsumi, ed. *Hyakurenshō*, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai* 11 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2004), p. 62.

- <sup>9</sup> LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō,” p. 343.
- <sup>10</sup> Kawada Jun, *Saigyō* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1939), pp. 111–18.
- <sup>11</sup> Shimonishi Zenzaburō is perhaps the only Japanese scholar to approach theories of Saigyō’s *shukke* as part of the larger process of reception and legend-building. His scope, however, is limited to two documents and essentially two groups of theories, necessitating the more comprehensive and systematic approach of this essay. See Shimonishi Zenzaburō, *Saigyō Chōmei: juyō to seisei* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2005), pp. 169–220.
- <sup>12</sup> See Kinoshita Motoichi and Uchida Yasuhiro, eds., “Saigyō denshō, Saigyōzō sōran: dōjidai kara kindai made,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 30.4 (1985), pp. 100–110. Shimonishi calls it the “constructed Saigyō persona” *tsukurareta Saigyōzō つくられた西行像* (Shimonishi, p. 169).
- <sup>13</sup> In August 2010, Yamamura Kōichi presented a paper at the annual Saigyō Studies Conference suggesting that Saigyō’s *shukke* had something to do with Pure Land beliefs and practices surrounding the west gate of the Shitennōji temple in Osaka, thought by some to be the entrance to the Western Paradise (*saihō gokuraku jōdo* 西方極樂淨土). Though not a full-blown theory, Yamamura’s suggestion illustrates the continued interest in and speculation about Saigyō’s *shukke* among Japanese scholars. See “*Nishi e iku to iu koto: Saigyō to Shitennōji saimon shinkō*,” in *Saigyōgaku* 2 (forthcoming).
- <sup>14</sup> Hashimoto Yoshihiko and Imae Hiromichi, eds., *Shiryō sanshū: kokirokuhen: Taiki*, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 52 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1976), p. 144.
- <sup>15</sup> This term may be translated as “admire” or “lament.” Observers may have admired Saigyō’s resolve in leaving behind wealth and promise though he had no discernible sorrows, or may have lamented such a step as perhaps improvident. Shimonishi interprets this awe to be that of Yorinaga and not other observers. Shimonishi, p. 180.
- <sup>16</sup> An anecdote in Kamo no Chōmei’s *Hosshinshū* 発心集 (c. 1214) recounting the sudden and unexpected *shukke* of a gentleman from the countryside in fact mirrors the language of Yorinaga’s diary entry in expressing surprise at the religious awakening of such a wealthy young man. See Miki, pp. 334–343.
- <sup>17</sup> Kuroita, *Sonpi bunmyaku*, p. 391.
- <sup>18</sup> *Saigyō monogatari* developed over a number of centuries (roughly thirteenth to seventeenth) and in a number of variant textual traditions. For more information on the textual history of *Saigyō monogatari*, see Meredith McKinney,

- “A Study of Saigyō monogatari,” Ph.D. thesis (The Australian National University, 2002), pp. 70–90, 316–338. McKinney has also published a translation of the tale based upon a different variant than that found in her Ph.D. thesis: *The Tale of Saigyō* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1998). Another excellent translation with an extensive introduction is by Gustav Heldt: “Saigyō’s Traveling Tale: A Translation of *Saigyō monogatari*,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 4 (1997), pp. 467–521.
- <sup>19</sup> Shimonishi, pp. 173–74.
- <sup>20</sup> English translation from McKinney, “A Study of Saigyō monogatari,” pp. 107–108. I have slightly altered the text in places, and substituted my own translations for the poems. See also McKinney’s published translation *The Tale of Saigyō*, pp. 24–26 for a more expanded version of this episode based upon the Shōhōbon manuscript of 1646. See pp. 490–492 of “Saigyō’s Traveling Tale” for Heldt’s translation of the Noriyasu episode.
- <sup>21</sup> McKinney, “A Study of Saigyō monogatari,” pp. 109–111. Kuwabara Hiroshi, ed., *Saigyō monogatari zenyakuchū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2002), pp. 54–56.
- <sup>22</sup> Yamaguchi Makoto, “Taira no Yasuyori to kebiishi—*Hōbutsushū* jochū,” in *Tomohisa Takefumi sensei koki kinen ronbunshū, chūsei denshō bungaku to sono shūhen* (Tokyo: Keisuishā, 1997), pp. 46–61; Yamaguchi Makoto, “Kebiishi no monogatari—*Saigyō monogatari* shiron,” in *Setsuwa ronshū dainanashū, chūsei setsuwa bungaku no sekai*, ed. Setsuwa to Setsuwa Bungaku no Kai (Tokyo: Seibundō, 1997), pp. 449–63. Saijū was a fellow samurai who also took the tonsure and became a frequent traveling companion to Saigyō. His secular name was Minamoto no Suemasa 源季政. For a thorough treatment of Saijū, see Matsumoto Bun’yū, *Saigyō no kage no hito Saijū o saguru* (Tokyo: Liber Press, 1995).
- <sup>23</sup> Yamaki Kōichi, “Saigyō no jigoku-e rensaku-uta ni tsuite,” *Waka bungaku kenkyū* 22 (1966), p. 23; Yamaki Kōichi, *Saigyō waka no keisei to juyō* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1987), pp. 8–10; See also Mezaki Tokue, *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1978), pp. 16–18; Yasuda, pp. 23–24.
- <sup>24</sup> Watanabe, p. 1078.
- <sup>25</sup> “Who shall I show them to this spring? / these bracken shoots from the hills I’ve picked as mementos of one now gone?” *Shin Nihon koten zenshū* 24 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997), p. 346.
- <sup>26</sup> *Kikigakishū* 1855 [212].

- <sup>27</sup> Asami Kazuhiko, ed. *Jikkishō*, in *Shin Nihon koten zenshū* 51 (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1997), p. 358.
- <sup>28</sup> Itō Yoshio, pp. 38–39, 51–52.
- <sup>29</sup> Kubota Jun, *Saigyō: sōan to tabiji ni utau* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 1996), p. 35.
- <sup>30</sup> Mizuhara Hajime, ed., *Shintei Genpei jōsuiki* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1989), pp. 355–56.
- <sup>31</sup> Watabe Osamu, *Saigyō* (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoin, 1998), pp. 58–60; Yasuda Ayao, *Saigyō* (Tokyo: Yayoi shobō, 1973), pp. 21–23; Yamaki Kōichi, *Saigyō no sekai* (Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1979), pp. 26–32; Takahashi Hideo, *Saigyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1993), p. 50–52; Itō Kei, “Saigyō to Taikenmon-in,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 65, no. 3 (2000), pp. 76–82.
- <sup>32</sup> Gomi Fumihiko, *Fujiwara no Teika no jidai—chūsei no bunka kūkan* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1991), pp. 120–22.
- <sup>33</sup> Matsunaga Goichi, “Saigyō to wa nanimono ka—seinaru vērū o hagu,” in *Saigyō to Kenkō: ransei o ikiru chie*, ed. Komatsu Kazuhiko, et al. (Tokyo: Wedge sensho, 2001), p. 30; Oyama Tokujirō, ed., *Saigyō hōshi zenkashū* (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1952), pp. 285–88.
- <sup>34</sup> Yasuda, p. 100. See also Watabe, pp. 58–60.
- <sup>35</sup> Yamaki, *Saigyō no sekai*, pp. 26–32.
- <sup>36</sup> Watabe, pp. 59–60; Yamaki, *Saigyō no sekai*, p. 27. Three of the four poems Watabe cites were also cited by Yasuda in his treatment of Saigyō’s love poems as “experiential” (Yasuda, pp. 105–15). Ironically, one of the poems Watabe cites (*Sankashū* 644 [590]) is a *dai-ei* 題詠 (poem on a set topic) and a sardonic comment on customary rhetoric in love poetry, making it hard to believe it refers to a specific experience.
- <sup>37</sup> *Sankashū* 743 [680]. Watabe also cites 644 [590], 726 [653], 731 [668].
- <sup>38</sup> See Kubota Jun and Baba Akiko, eds., *Utakotoba utamakura daijiten* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1999), pp. 134 (*uki mi*), 224 (*kazu narazu*), 818 (*mi*), 846 (*mi no hodo*).
- <sup>39</sup> See Takahashi Shōji, *Saigyō no shingachirin* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995), pp. 62–93; Kubota Jun, *Shinkokin kajin no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1978), pp. 33–43.
- <sup>40</sup> *Sankashū* 779 [716].
- <sup>41</sup> See Shimonishi, pp. 184–85.

- <sup>42</sup> Shimonishi has this as a separate theory and points to Itō Yoshio as its first proponent. See Itō Yoshio, *Kajin Saigyō* (Tokyo: Sagi no miya shobō, 1956), pp. 39–44, 51–52. He also categorizes the following “infatuation with the thatched hut life” and “simple desire to live a better life” motives as full-fledged theories, pointing to, respectively, Kubota Jun (*Shinkokin kajin no kenkyū*, pp. 33–43) and Kubota Shōichirō (*Saigyō no kenkyū: Saigyō no waka ni tsuite no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1962), pp. 103–105) as the proponents. Shimonishi, p. 173.
- <sup>43</sup> See Itō Yoshio, pp. 51–52; Kubota Jun, *Shinkokin kajin no kenkyū*, pp. 33–43; See also my “Between Monks: Saigyō’s *Shukke*, Homosocial Desire, and Japanese Poetry,” *Japanese Language and Literature* 43, no. 2 (2009), pp. 425–452.
- <sup>44</sup> Kubota Jun, *Shinkokin kajin no kenkyū*, p. 41.
- <sup>45</sup> Kubota Shōichirō wrote: “At the root was the pure hope and desire of a human being to toss away the life he might have led if he remained in his secular existence, wanting to live in a better way.” See *Saigyō no kenkyū*, pp. 103–105.
- <sup>46</sup> William R. LaFleur has argued that Saigyō’s “total enchantment with nature and his compelling desire to be totally at one with it” was an underlying cause of his *shukke* and at the core of his poetic expression. I include this theory under the “world-weariness” rubric rather than as an independent theory because it still assumes a rejection of secular, societal life in favor of immersion in nature. In LaFleur’s argument, nature *is* the dharma for Saigyō and hence Norikiyo’s choice is still a rejection of secular life in favor of a path toward salvation. See LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō,” pp. 353–354. See also LaFleur, “Saigyō and the Buddhist Value of Nature, Parts I and II,” *History of Religions* 13, no. 2 (1973), no. 3 (1974), pp. 93–128, 227–248; LaFleur, “Saigyō the Priest and His Poetry of Reclusion: A Buddhist Valorization of Nature in Twelfth-Century Japan,” Ph.D. dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1973).
- <sup>47</sup> Steven D. Carter, “On a Bare Branch: Bashō and the Haikai Profession,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117, no. 1 (1997), pp. 60–61.
- <sup>48</sup> Mezaki, *Suki to mujō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), p. 18–20. Mezaki points to Yamaki Kōichi and Hagiwara Masayoshi as the sources of the term. Nevertheless, Mezaki writes, “it should perhaps be called the ‘literary cause theory’ (*bungaku gen’insetsu to mo iu beki* 文学原因説ともいうべき)” in *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, p. 101. Mezaki has written about *suki*, *tonsei*, and Saigyō’s *shukke* a number of times. See *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, pp. 100–132, 390–409; “Aesthete-Recluses During the Transition from Ancient to

Medieval Japan,” in *Principles of Classical Japanese Literature*, ed. Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 151–80; *Suki to mujō*, pp. 1–21, 89–114.

- <sup>49</sup> Miki, p. 278.
- <sup>50</sup> Rajyashree Pandey, *Writing and Renunciation in Medieval Japan: The Works of the Poet-Priest Kamo no Chōmei* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1998), pp. 114–123; Mezaki, “Aesthete-Recluses,” p. 153.
- <sup>51</sup> After the Momoyama period, the terms *suki* and *sukisha* 数寄者 (*suki* devotee, or aesthete) were most often applied to practitioners of the tea ceremony, and this association continues to the present.
- <sup>52</sup> Kamo no Chōmei thoroughly detailed the various expressions of *suki* in his works *Mumyōshō* 無名抄 (c. 1211–1216) and *Hosshinshū*. Other works that tell us about *suki* and its practitioners in Heian and medieval Japan are *Senjūshō* 撰集抄 (long thought to have been compiled by Saigyō), *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (1218), and *Fukuro zōshi* 袋草紙 (c. 1158).
- <sup>53</sup> Saigyō’s rank prevented him from associating directly (other than as an attendant) with the upper echelons of court and, by extension, court poetic society.
- <sup>54</sup> Mezaki, *Suki to mujō*, pp. 91–104; Mezaki, *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, pp. 100–132.
- <sup>55</sup> The poet Miya Shūji nuanced this argument: “What Saigyō aimed for was to pass through the gate of *shukke*, and with the life of a holy man as his material for composing poetry, he planned to stand on his own as a poet.” See “Saigyō o yomu,” in *Kanshō Nihon koten bungaku* 17 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1993), p. 447.
- <sup>56</sup> Mezaki, *Suki to mujō*, p. 93.
- <sup>57</sup> Dao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427) was a poet who shunned official life and left court, spurred by the death of his sister, in order to live in reclusion. The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (ca. third century) were a group of court officials noted for their artistic gatherings at the Bamboo Grove and their eccentricities, which implicitly condemned the corruption of court life during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280).
- <sup>58</sup> Fujioka Sakutarō, *Saigyō ron* (Hongō Shoin, 1906), reprinted in *Ochiai Naobumi, Ueda Kazutoshi, Haga Yaichi, Fujioka Sakutarō shū*, ed. Hisamatsu Shin’ichi (Chikuma shobō, 1968), pp. 344–347, 350–352. See also G. Cam-

eron Hurst, *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 583–595.

- <sup>59</sup> Retired Emperor Shirakawa 白河院 (1053–1129; r. 1072–1086) was senior retired emperor during the reigns of three sovereigns, Horikawa 堀河 (1079–1107, r. 1087–1107), Toba (1103–1156, r. 1107–1123), and Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164, r. 1123–1142), though he exerted minimal influence during Horikawa’s reign. It was Toba that Saigyō served as a member of the Northern Guard. Toba had two consorts, Taikenmon-in and Bifukumon-in. Taikenmon-in, as mentioned previously, was the daughter of Saigyō’s former master Tokudaiji no Saneyoshi. It was common knowledge in court circles that Taikenmon-in was promiscuous and that Taikenmon-in’s son Sutoku was not Toba’s son, but the son of Toba’s father Shirakawa. Shirakawa forced Toba to abdicate in 1123 in favor of Sutoku, something which rankled Toba. Thus, when the future emperor Konoe 近衛 (1139–1155) was born to Bifukumon-in, Toba was eager to establish imperial succession through his own line, rather than that of Shirakawa/Sutoku.
- <sup>60</sup> Yasuda, p. 23.
- <sup>61</sup> Gomi Fumihiko, “Satō Norikiyo no shukke,” *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 39, no. 8 (1994), pp. 38–39.
- <sup>62</sup> Yamaguchi, “Kebiishi no monogatari,” pp. 449–463.
- <sup>63</sup> Okada Kishū, *Saigyō no tabiji* (Tokyo: Shūsakusha, 2005), p. 83.
- <sup>64</sup> Mezaki, *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, pp. 39–78.
- <sup>65</sup> Okada, pp. 79–84.
- <sup>66</sup> Matsunaga Goichi, *Saigyō gensō* (Tokyo: Kōsei shuppan, 1989), pp. 63–76.
- <sup>67</sup> Mezaki Tokue, *Suki to mujō*, pp. 11–19.
- <sup>68</sup> Yoshimura Shigeki, “In hokumen kō,” *Hōseishi kenkyū* 2 (1952), pp. 45–72; Tōno Haruyuki, “Nikki ni miru Fujiwara Yorinaga no nanshoku kankei—ōchō kizoku no uita sekusuarisu,” *Hisutoria* 84 (1979), pp. 15–29; Gomi Fumihiko, *Inseiki shakai no kenkyū* (Degawa Shuppan, 1984), pp. 416–441; Gomi Fumihiko, “Inseiki no sei to seiji, buryoku,” *Bungaku* 6, no. 1 (1995), pp. 13–22.
- <sup>69</sup> Kin’yoshi was also Yorinaga’s brother-in-law. *Sankashū* records two poetic exchanges between Saigyō and Kin’yoshi: 856 [785], 857 [786] and 1015 [933], 1016 [934].
- <sup>70</sup> Miki, pp. 262–64. According to *Hosshinshū*, Saigyō did not want his daughter

to be raised by Ieakira and hence took the bold step of making her a nun (against the wishes of her adoptive sister). Mezaki conjectures that this may have been due to Saigyō's dislike of Ieakira, since he was aligned with the Bifukumon-in/Konoe side of the Hōgen succession struggle, whereas Saigyō was "aligned" with the Taikenmon-in/Sutoku side. See Mezaki, *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>71</sup> Mezaki, *Suki to mujō*, p. 12.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Stoneman, "Between Monks," pp. 429–430.

<sup>74</sup> LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, pp. 8–16.

<sup>75</sup> Satō Masahide, "Saigyō to inton," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 65, no. 3 (2000), p. 20.

<sup>76</sup> *Sankashū* 789 [726].

<sup>77</sup> Satō, p. 24. This poem has also been interpreted as part of the failed love affair theory. See Kubota, *Shinkokin kajin no kenkyū*, pp. 34–35 for Kubota Jun's, Kubota Shōichirō's, and Kazamaki Keijirō's positions on the identity of the "one who may understand."

<sup>78</sup> Matsunaga, *Saigyō Gensō*, pp. 63–76.

<sup>79</sup> *Sankashū* 853 [782].

<sup>80</sup> See Stoneman, "Between Monks," pp. 430–432.

<sup>81</sup> Mezaki, *Saigyō no shisōshiteki kenkyū*, pp. 100–101.

<sup>82</sup> Oyama, p. 285–288.

<sup>83</sup> Itō Yoshio, pp. 51–52.

<sup>84</sup> Kubota Shōichirō, *Saigyō no kenkyū*, pp. 103–105. Kubota's use of the terms "fulfilling the self" and "setting the self free" are, like Mezaki's "free men," anachronistic in tone.

<sup>85</sup> Kawada, pp. 111–115.

<sup>86</sup> LaFleur, "The Death and 'Lives' of the Poet-Monk Saigyō," p. 353.

<sup>87</sup> For example, *Sankashū* 786 [723], 787 [724], 788 [725], 789 [726].

<sup>88</sup> As Shimonishi Zenzaburō points out, the narrative of Saigyō's *shukke* in *Genpei jōsuiki* fits a recurring pattern within the work—that of "annotating," or "cross-referencing" the origins of certain events—just as the entire tale is an

exploration of the “origins” of the rise and fall of the Heike (Shimonishi, pp. 169–171).

- <sup>89</sup> More specifically, the narrative of Saigyō’s *shukke* found in the failed love affair theory may be an effort to echo the narrative of Mongaku’s 文覺 (Endō Moritō 遠藤盛遠, 1129–1203) *shukke* as recounted by *Genpei jōsuiki*. However, as Shimonishi shows, the Saigyō narrative does not exhibit the “love triangle” pattern that the Mongaku narrative does (Shimonishi, pp. 171–173; see also pp. 189–195 for a detailed analysis of *Genpei jōsuiki*’s treatment of Saigyō). Shimonishi recognizes in the *Genpei jōsuiki* account a number of correspondences to pre-existing narrative patterns, such as historical citation of empresses’ inappropriate involvements, unequal status relationships, and the “Akogi” pattern of rebuff by a high-ranking woman. He points to Kenreimon-in 建礼門院 (1155–1214) in *Heike monogatari*, Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平 (825–880) in *Ise monogatari*, Kashiwagi 柏木 in *Genji monogatari*, and Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162–1241) and Shokushi Naishinnō 式子内親王 (1149–1201) in the *noh* play *Teika*, among other examples (Shimonishi, pp. 208–217).
- <sup>90</sup> McKinney, “A Study of Saigyō monogatari,” p. 110.
- <sup>91</sup> Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), considered the founder of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan, after reading Shandao’s 善導 (613–681) commentary on the *Sutra of Contemplation of Infinite Life* (*Kanmuryōjūkyō* 觀無量壽經), began preaching the importance of the single practice of *nenbutsu*, or intoning of the name of Amida Buddha, in 1175. By 1198, he had written his treatise on *nenbutsu* entitled *Senchaku hongan nenbutsushū* 選択本願念仏集 and gained a following. Hōnen’s disciple Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1263) founded his own True Pure Land sect (*Jōdo Shinshū* 浄土真宗), continuing the practice of *nenbutsu* and emphasizing on *zenchishiki* as guides toward acceptance of Amida’s grace.
- <sup>92</sup> Yamaguchi Makoto, “*Saigyō monogatari* no kōzōteki saihen to Jishū,” *Kōchidai kokubun* 23 (1992), pp. 11–26.
- <sup>93</sup> Some of these famous places are temples or shrines. Many are also *utamakura* 歌枕, or famous poetic sites. Most medieval audiences believed Saigyō’s journeys were primarily to visit *utamakura*.
- <sup>94</sup> See LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō,” p. 343.
- <sup>95</sup> Heldt, “Saigyō’s Traveling Tale,” pp. 471–474, 476. In addition to the examples Heldt cites—Nun Abutsu 阿仏尼 (1222?–1283), Lady Nijō 後深草院二条 (1258–?), and Lady Heigo 平五 (dates unknown)—there is evidence of *amadera* 尼寺, or nunneries, being built during the medieval and early modern

periods at important sites associated with Saigyō. See Mezaki, “Bashō no uchi naru Saigyō,” in *Bashō no uchi naru Saigyō* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1991), pp. 15–16. See also Mezaki, “Tabi-suru onnatachi,” in *Bashō no uchi naru Saigyō*, pp. 138–147.

<sup>96</sup> See John Brownlee, “*Jikkishō*: A Miscellany of Ten Maxims,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 29, no. 2 (1974), pp. 121–132.

<sup>97</sup> Miki, pp. 263–268.

<sup>98</sup> There are nevertheless many examples of premodern audiences “humanizing” Saigyō, especially in folk tales and noh plays based on episodes from his life other than *shukke*. Saigyō’s *shukke*, however, became part of the larger Buddhist discourse of religious awakening, which was largely hagiographic in nature.

<sup>99</sup> LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, p. 15. See also LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō,” pp. 344–353.

<sup>100</sup> Haruo Shirane, “Curriculum and Competing Canons,” in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 220. See also Michael C. Brownstein, “From *Kokugaku* to *Kokubungaku*: Canon-Formation in the Meiji Period,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (1987), pp. 435–460.

<sup>101</sup> The Sino-Japanese War occurred in 1894–1895. The Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) occurred just one year prior to the publication of Fujioka’s *Saigyō-ron*. The merging of literati and Buddhist ideals in the expression of *tonsei* was not new to the modern era. Yoshishige no Yasutane’s 慶滋保胤 (c. 931–1002) *Chiteiki* 池亭記 is an early example of the combination of literati and Buddhist renunciation ideals.

<sup>102</sup> Similarly, it is possible that the homophobia some modern scholars ascribe to Saigyō is in fact more revealing of their own attitudes toward contemporary male-male sexuality. As I have discussed elsewhere (“Between Monks,” pp. 428–429; 440–443), modern notions of sexuality have inevitably skewed our readings of what in the Heian period was a more nuanced spectrum of social, sexual, and poetic praxis.

<sup>103</sup> A noh play by Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?–1443?).

<sup>104</sup> The *suki* theory of course bridges premodern and modern reception, and could hence be categorized either way, with the most important contributors

being Saigyō's contemporary Kamo no Chōmei, his Edo-period champion Matsuo Bashō, and the twentieth-century scholar Mezaki Tokue.

- <sup>105</sup> Shimonishi, pp. 188–189. In his treatment of Saigyō's *shukke*, Shimonishi relies upon Nakamura Aya's assertions that "biographical research" does not hold a monopoly on "historical facts," and that biographical research cannot always accurately reconstruct the past. Nakamura looks specifically at the intersections (or, more accurately, the in-between spaces) of *monogatari* and biography in the reception of Heian-period poets. See Nakamura Aya, "Denki to monogatari no hazama ni," in *Monogatari to iu kairo*, ed. Akasaka Norio (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1992), pp. 83–130.
- <sup>106</sup> Kawada, pp. 164–270.
- <sup>107</sup> Kubota Shōichirō, *Kajin Saigyō: seikatsu to uta* (Tokyo: Tanka shinbunsha, 1989), pp. 34–35, 83–98.
- <sup>108</sup> Matsumoto Akio, *Saigyō: sono uta sono shōgai* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008).
- <sup>109</sup> Setouchi Jakuchō, *Byakudō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995). Setouchi won the Minister of Education and Culture Arts Commendation Prize for *Byakudō*. Setouchi wrote another novel, *Hana ni toe* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1992), about Ippen, for which she received the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize. Formerly Setouchi Harumi 瀬戸内晴美, Jakuchō became a nun in 1973. Her interest in Saigyō is natural, since she has continued to write as a nun, and her admiration for Saigyō and Ippen as renouncers of love and secular life is obvious in her writings. *Byakudō* recounts Norikiyo's relationship with Taikenmon-in and the ensuing disappointment leading to his *shukke*. A 2005 television drama entitled *Onna no ichidaki* 女の一代記, based upon Jakuchō's own writings, dramatized Setouchi's own path to *shukke*, asking the perennial "why?" question. In the drama, the young Harumi is torn between two lovers before leaving the pain of love behind to become a nun. Jakuchō has indicated that the content of the drama is in fact based on lived experience.
- <sup>110</sup> Arashiyama Kōzaburō, *Saigyō to Kiyomori* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1992); Tsuji Kunio, *Saigyō kaden* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1995); Kotani Kyōsuke, *Saigyō densetsu satsujin jiken* (Tokyo: Haruki bunko, 1999); Nagao Uka, *Saigyō hōshi hokukōshō* (Tokyo: PHP Bunko, 2004); Mita Masahiro, *Saigyō tsuki ni koi suru* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2008), *Ashura no Saigyō* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2010). See also novelist Shirasu Masako's *Saigyō* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1988). Although a biography, Shirasu's narrative is at times a creative reinterpretation of Saigyō not unlike the novels listed. See pp. 9–53 for her treatment of Saigyō's *shukke*.

- <sup>111</sup> Shanhai Arisu Gengakudan, *Tōhō purojekuto*, 2003-present. Saigyōji Yuyuko first appeared as a character in this series in 2003.
- <sup>112</sup> See Kubota Jun, *Saigyō zenshū* (Nihon koten bungakukai, 1996), pp. 1073–1120, for most of the Saigyō-related noh and *kyōgen*.
- <sup>113</sup> For example, *Saigyō hōshi sumizome-zakura* 西行法師墨染桜, a mid-seventeenth century *jōruri* (Yamada An’ei, Itō Chikara, and Iwahashi Koyata, eds., *Saigyō hōshi sumizome-zakura*, in *Tokugawa bungei ruijū* 8 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1914), pp. 350–386), and *Gunpō Fujimi Saigyō* 軍法富士見西行, a 1745 *jōruri* (Katō Atsuko, ed., *Gunpō Fujimi Saigyō*, in *Takemotoza jōrurishū* 3, ed. Takada Mamoru and Hara Michio (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1996), pp. 251–346).
- <sup>114</sup> LaFleur, “The Death and ‘Lives’ of the Poet-Monk Saigyō,” pp. 344–345, 357–358.
- <sup>115</sup> Shimonishi, pp. 174–176.
- <sup>116</sup> Another factor in the tendency to read Saigyō’s poetry as autobiography is the relatively frequent occurrence of narrative headnotes, or *kotobagaki* 詞書, with his poems, which provide more of his poems with contexts than is typical of poetry of his day.
- <sup>117</sup> See Haruo Shirane, *et al.*, “Zadankai ‘Nihon’ to ‘bungaku’ o kaitai suru: kisei gainen o kuzushi, atarashii bungakuzō o dō tsukuru ka,” *Ripōto Kasama* 50 (2009), p. 9.
- <sup>118</sup> *Sankashū*, Spring, 87 [76].
- <sup>119</sup> See Kubota and Baba, pp. 134 (*uki mi*), 224 (*kazu narazu*), 818 (*mi*), 846 (*mi no hodo*), 974 (*waga mi*).
- <sup>120</sup> Heldt, “Saigyō’s Traveling Tale,” p. 468.
- <sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.
- <sup>122</sup> See Kubota Jun, “Saigyōzō o motomete,” *Saigyō to Kenkō: ransei o ikiru chie*, ed. Komatsu Kazuhiko, *et al.* (Tokyo: Wedge sensho, 2001), pp. 91–100.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 467–468.

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