

SELECTED POEMS BY SAIGYO WITH MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS

1. abaretaru / kusa no iori ni / moru tsuki o / sode ni utsushite / nagametsuru kana

Into this broken
grass hut,
the moon filters in,
is mirrored on my sleeve,
and I gaze, deeply.
--dlb

This leaky, tumbledown
grass hut left an opening for the moon,
and I gazed at it
all the while it was mirrored
in a teardrop fallen on my sleeve.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 86

2. chiru o mide / kaeru kokoro ya / sakurabana / mukashi ni kawaru / shirushi naruran

Their scattering unseen,
yet my heart returns--
cherry blossoms:
they seem to be a sign
that I'm not what I was long ago
--dlb

This frame of mind
lets me go back even without
seeing the blossoms fall:
maybe it's some sign I am
no more than one I used to be.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 80

Your fall unseen,
My heart turned homeward.
Cherry-flowers--
It is a sign I am not now
What I was long ago.
--Takagi 64

3. fukaku irite / kamiji no oku o / tazunureba / mata ue mo naki / mine no matsukaze

Entering deeply,
searching out the depths
of the pathway of the gods:
high above, over all,
a mountain peak with pine wind
--DLB

Following the paths
the gods passed over, I seek
their innermost place;

up and up to the highest of all:
peak where wind passes through pines.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall* 50

Already deeply entered,
As I inquire of the pathway of the gods
About what lies beyond,
Above me looms a matchless peak
Where the wind sings in the pines.
--Miner IJCP 149

After he [Saigyô] had lived long enough on Mt. Kôya, he went to live in a mountain temple at Futaminoura. Since it was a sacred mountain near the Ise shrines, it was called Mt. Kamiji [Divine Path], because it was believed that it was an avatar of the Buddha Dainichi.

4. *fukaki yama ni / kokoro no tsuki shi / suminureba / kagami ni yomo no /satori o zo miru*

"'Preachers of the Dharma' Chapter [of the Lotus Sutra]: If a man devotes to [the Lotus Sutra] a single moment of rejoicing, on him, too, I confer the prophecy of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi"

Deep in the mountains
the moon of my mind
is clear--
and so in the mirror
I see enlightenment all around
--dlb

On that chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* entitled "A Peaceful Life," and especially on the phrase "Entering deeply into meditation and seeing buddhahood in all ten directions":

In the mountain's deep
places, the moon of the mind
resides in light serene:
moon mirrors all things everywhere,
mind mirrors moon...in satori now.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 69b, *Awesome Nightfall*, 130

Deep in the mountains
now the moon of the mind
shines clearly,
I can see enlightenment everywhere
in the mirror of my mind.
--Watanabe HR 394

5. *fukaki yama ni / sumikeru tsuki o / mizariseba / omoide mo naki / waga mi naramashi*

Deep in the mountains:
had I not seen the moon
that resides there so clear,
I would have become someone
without memories
--dlb

Passage into dark
mountains over which the moon
presides so brilliantly . . .
Not seeing it, I'd have missed
this passage into my own past.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 22

6. furuhata no / soba no tatsu ki ni / iru hato no / tomo yobu koe no / sugoki yûgure

A tree on a cliff
rising by an abandoned field:
from it a dove's call
mournful to its mate--
desolate nightfall
--dlb

An ancient field
and in the sole tree starkly
rising to its side
sits a dove, calling to its mate:
the awesome nightfall.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall* 65

Old field run to ruin
And in the sole tree starkly
Rising on a bluff
Sits a dove, mourning its mate:
The awesome nightfall.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 49b

In a tree that stands
on the crag
by abandoned paddies,
a dove calling to its companion
in the desolate twilight
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 154

In a tree standing
Beside a desolate field,
The voice of a dove
Calling to its companions--
Lonely, terrible evening.
--Keene AJL 196

7. fuyugare no / susamajigenaru / yamazato ni / tsuki no sumu koso / aware narikere

Withered winter's
desolate
mountain village:
the moon's clarity itself
has become *aware*
--dlb

Winter has withered
everything in this mountain place:
dignity is in
its desolation now, and beauty
in the cold clarity of its moon.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 25b, *Awesome Nightfall*, 94

8. hana chirade / tsuki wa kumoran / yo nariseba / mono o omowan / waga mi naramashi

Were the world without
a falling blossom
or the clouded moon,
I could no longer live
in sad longing
--dlb

A world without
the scattering of blossoms,
without the clouding
over of the moon would deprive
me of my melancholy.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 77

9. hana ni somu / kokoro wa ikade / nokoriken / sutehateteki to / omou waga mi ni

This heart dyed
in blossoms:
why does it remain--
I had thought
I had thrown the world away
--dlb

Why do I, who broke
so completely with this world,
find in my body
still the pulsing of a heart
once dyed in blossoms' hues?
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 78

Why should my heart
still harbor
this passion for cherry flowers,
I who thought
I had put all that behind me?
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 39

How has it fared--
The heart so palely dyed
By the blossoms?
It seemed to me I had renounced
All attachments to the world.
--Mezaki, "Aesthete Recluses," 172

10. haruka naru / iwa no hazama ni / hitori ite / hitome omowade / monoomowabaya

Off in the distance,
in a space between rocks,
I wish to live alone,
thinking not of others' eyes,
thinking only of my grief
--dlb

Boulder-encircled
space, so far from everything
that here I'm all alone:
a place where none can view me
but I can review all things.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 32

Boulder-encircled
Empty space, so far away that
Here I'm all alone:
A place where man can't view me
But I can review all things.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 83a

Living all alone
In this space between the rocks
Far from the city,
Here, where no one can see me,
I shall give myself to grief.
--Keene AJL 196

In some far-off
cleft of the rock
let me live alone,
thinking no longer of outsiders' eyes,
thinking only of my love
--Watson, *From a Country of Eight Islands*, 170

Oh, to be hidden
in a cleft between great rocks,
someplace far away,
with no fear of being seen--
there to bear my pains alone.
--Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry*, 163

11. izuku ni mo / sumarezuba tada / sumade aran / shiba no iori no / shibashi naru yo ni

If I cannot dwell
anywhere, let me then
stay nowhere,
in this world
brief as a grass hut.
--dlb

Nowhere is there place
to stop and live, so only
everywhere will do:
each and every grass-made hut soon leaves
its place within this withering world.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 151

If I can find
no place fit to live,
let me live "no place"--
in this hut of sticks
flimsy as the world itself
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 216

12. kakaru yo ni / kage mo kawarazu / sumu tsuki o / miru waga mi sae / urameshiki kana

In such a world,
must even I, who see
the moon clear,
the light unchanging,
have such sorrow
--dlb

Times when unbroken
gloom is over all our world...
above which still
presides the ever-brilliant moon:
sight of it casts me down more.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 28

In such a world as this,
Must even I who view
The pure moon's
Clear unchanging light
Be grieving?
--Takagi 50

13. kaze ni nabiku / fuji no keburu no / sora ni kiete / yukue mo shiranu / waga omoi kana

Yielding to the wind,
the smoke from Fuji
dissolves into sky;
with direction unknown,
my passions burn
--dlb

"When undertaking religious exercises in the eastern region, I wrote the following in view of Mount Fuji:"

The wisps of smoke from Fuji
Yield to the wind and lose themselves
In sky, in emptiness--
Which takes as well the aimless passions

That through my life burned deep inside.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 88a & *Awesome Nightfall* 59

Trailing on the wind,
the smoke of Mount Fuji
fades in the sky,
moving like my thoughts
toward some unknown end
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 210

As smoke that drifts
from the peak of Fuji,
fading into sky
with no sure destination--
so is the trend of my passion.
--Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry*, 164

Smoke on the wind
trailing about Mount Fuji
fades into the sky—
as unsure in destination
as my troubled thoughts.
--Carter, *Waiting for the Wind*, 194

Bending to the wind
The smoke above Mount Fuji
Vanishes in sky--
The matter of a destination
Is nothing my thoughts know.
--Mezaki, "Aesthete-Recluses," 17

14. kokoro naki / mi ni mo aware wa / shirarekeri / shigi tatsu sawa no / aki no yugure

Even one who is
free of passions
feels such sorrow:
a marsh where a snipe rises
into autumn evening
--dlb

I thought I was free
of passions, so this melancholy
comes as surprise:
a woodcock shoots up from marsh
where autumn's twilight falls.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall* 68

Even to someone
Free of passions this sadness
Would be apparent:
Evening in autumn over
A marsh where a shipe rises.
--Keene AJL 195

Even a person free of passion
would understand
this sadness:
autumn evening
in a marsh where snipes fly up.
--Watson, *From a Country of Eight Islands*, 172

A man without feelings,
Even, would know sadness
When snipe start from the marshes
On an autumn evening.
--Bownas & Thwaite 100

While denying his heart,
Even a priest must feel his body know
The depths of a sad beauty:
From a marsh at autumn twilight,
Snipe that rise to wing away.
--Brower & Miner JCP 295, IJCP 103 [106]

Even a soul schooled
To do without the human heart
Knows how such things feel--
From the marsh a longbill
Flies into the autumn dusk.
--Mezaki, "Aesthete-Recluses," 176

Even one who claims
to no longer have a heart
feels this sad beauty:
a snipe flying up from a marsh
on an evening in autumn.
--Carter, *Waiting for the Wind*, 172, *The Road to Komatsubara*, 157

15. *kuchi mo senu / sono na bakari o / todomeokite / kareno no susuki / katami ni zo miru*

Never to decay:
only the name
he left behind;
I gaze at his relic,
the withered grass
--dlb

One part of him
escaped decay -- his name,
still around here like
this bleak field's withered grass:
my view of the relic he left.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 24 (with headnote)

His name alone,
imperishable,
he left behind--

pampass grass in withered fields

I see as his memento

--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 131 (with headnote)

kuma mo naki / tsuki no hikari ni / sasowarete / iku kumoi made / yuku kokoro zo mo

Undimmed, boundless,

the light of the moon:

enticed by it,

my heart wanders to the

cloud-tipped edges of the sky

--dlb

So taken with

the faultless face and radiance

of an alluring moon,

my mind goes farther...farther...

to reach remote regions of the sky.

--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 14a

16. kumo oō / futakami-yama no / tsukikage wa / kokoro ni sumu ya / miru ni aruramu

Clouds thickly mantle

these mountains, but the blocked moon

had already taken up residence

in my mind, so nothing now prevents

me from seeing its serenity there.

--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 66-67

A verse on the essence of "the white lotus flower put in a circle an elbow's length (about 50 centimeters) across."

The light of the moon

on Mount Futakami,

covered with clouds,

could be seen residing

in the mind in its purity.

--Watanabe 392

17. kumori naki / yama nite umi no / tsuki mireba / shima zo kori no / taema narikeru

"I was in the province of Sanuki and in the mountains where Kōbō Daishi had once lived. While there, I stayed in a hut I had woven together out of grasses. The moon was especially bright and, looking in the direction of the [Inland] Sea, my vision was unclouded."

Cloudfree mountains

encircle the sea, which holds

the reflected moon:

this transforms islands into

emptiness holes in a sea of ice.

--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 36

Cloud-free mountains
Encircle the sea, which holds
The reflected moon:
A view of it there changes the islands
Into holes of emptiness in a sea of ice.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 59b

I look out
from the cloudless mountain
at moonlight on the sea,
its islands so many rents
in a sheet of ice
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 183

18. nagamu tote / hana ni mo itaku / narenureba / chiru wakere koso / kanshikarikere

Gazing at them, immersed,
I become so intimate
with the blossoms;
and with the falling away and separation
comes sorrow.
--dlb

"Detached" observer
of blossoms finds himself in time
intimate with them--
so, when they separate from the branch,
it's he who falls...deeply into grief.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 80

Gazing at them,
I've grown so very close
to these blossoms,
to part with them when they fall
seems bitter indeed!
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 45

Thinking to gaze at them,
I grew extremely close
to the cherry blossoms,
making the scattered parting
ever so painful.
--Shirane, *Traces of Dreams*, 75

19. nami no oto o / kokoro ni kakete / akasu kana / toma moru tsuki no / kage o tomo nite

With my heart turned
to the sound of the waves
I stay up till dawn,
the moonlight through the
reed roof my companion
--dlb

Pounding waves are breakers...
Of my heart, so I spend the night
In bed with the moon's
Light that slips in through
The gaps in my reed hut's roof.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 89

With all thoughts turned
to the sound of waves
I spent the whole night up
with the moon coming through
chinks in the reed thatched hut as my companion
--Harries

20. oshimu tote / oshimarenubeki / kono yo kawa / mi o sutete koso / mi o mo tasukeme

Thinking: "so loath to lose it",
but is this world something
we should loathe to lose?
By throwing the self away
the self is saved.
--dlb

So loath to lose
what maybe should be loathed:
one's place in the world;
we maybe rescue best the self
by simply throwing it away.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 12

Saying that one regrets
One cannot yet regret
To leave the world.
To cast the self away
Is but to save the self.
--Takagi 60

21. tou hito mo / omoitaetaru / yamazato no / sabishisa nakuba / sumiukaramashi

No longer hoping
for visitors--
this mountain village:
were there no loneliness,
dwelling here would be misery
--dlb

Hoped-for, looked for
guests just never made it to
my mountain hut--
whose congenial loneliness
I'd hate to live without.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 115

In this mountain village
where I've given up
all hope of visitors,
how drab life would be
without my loneliness
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 144

I have given up
all hope of having visitors
in my mountain home.
If not for solitude,
how dismal my life would be!
--Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry*, 167

I hope no more
That any friend will come to visit
This village in the hills,
And if it were not for loneliness,
This would be a wretched place to live.
--B&M JCP 261, Miner IJCP 111

I have stopped hoping now
That any come to see me
In this mountain village.
Without the loneliness
'T were misery to live here.
--Takagi 68

22. warinashi ya / koru kakei no / mizu yue ni / omoisuteteshi / haru no mataruru

So bitter, yet unavoidable:
water frozen
in the bamboo pipe,
and now this waiting
for the spring I had spurned
--dlb

It was bound to be:
my vow to be unattached
to seasons and such—
I, who by a frozen bamboo pipe
now wait for water, long for spring
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 16

It was bound to be:
My vow to be unattached
To seasons and such...
I, who by a frozen bamboo pipe
Now watch and wait for spring.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 28

A melancholy thing.
Because of water frozen
In a bamboo pipe,

I sit here longing for
The spring my thoughts had spurned.
--Takagi 64

23. yama fukami / iwa ni shitataru / mizu tamemu / katsugatsu otsuru / tochi hirou hodo

Deep in the mountains,
I'll collect water
dripping from the rocks
while picking up horse chestnuts
that plop down from time to time
--dlb

So remote the mountains,
I collect water
as it drips from the rocks,
in intervals gathering horse chestnuts
that come plop-plopping down
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 171

Deep wooded mountain—
Water dripping off the rocks
Gets to be a puddle
While I pick up now-and-then
Falling horse chestnuts.
--LaFleur, *Karma of Words*, 153

Deep in the mountains
water dripping on the rocks—
I'll block its flow
and pick up the tochi nuts
that fall time and time again.
--Ueda, *Bashō and His Interpreters*, 211

Mountain deep, I'll collect the water dripping from rocks, for now picking fallen horse chestnuts.
--Sato, *Narrow Road*, 60

24. yama fukami / kejikaki tori no / oto wa sede / mono osoroshiki / fukurō no koe

Deep in the mountains—
no song of birds close to what
we knew at home,
just the spine-tingling hoots
of owls in the night.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 20

Deep in the mountains,
No call of any bird at all close
And familiar...
Just the spine-tingling hoot
Of that mountain owl.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 56b

So remote the mountains,
no friendly birds
chirping close by--
only the fearful
voice of the owl.
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 172

Deeply hidden in the mountains
I can't hear the cry
Of those birds I am used to.
Only the melancholy hooting
Of the owls.
--Marra 1991:98

25. yoshino yama / kozue no hana o / mishi hi yori / kokoro wa mi ni mo / sowazunariniki

Yoshino mountains:
from that day I saw
those blossoms branches,
my heart has been gone
from my self
--dlb

Journeying alone:
now my body knows the absence
even of its own heart,
which stayed behind that day when
it saw Yoshino's treetops.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall* 76

Since the day I saw
Mount Yoshino's
blossoming treetops,
my body's one place,
my heart in another
--Burton Watson, *Poems from a Mountain Home*, 36

From the day I say
The blossom on the branch
At Yoshino,
My heart has been at odds
With priestly me.
--Takagi 69

Since the first day
I saw the blossoms on the trees
At Mount Yoshino
My yearning heart has seemed
Separated from my body.
--Mezaki, "Aesthete Recluses," 171

26. yoshi saraba / namida no ike ni / mi o nashite / kokoro no mama ni / tsuki o yadosan

So be it:
crying my body
into a pond of tears,
my heart as it is
housing the moon
--dlb

It will be good:
my body may cry itself into
a pond of tears,
but in it my unchanged heart
will give lodging to the moon.
--LaFleur, *Mirror for the Moon*, 31b, *Awesome Nightfall*, 100

27. yukue naku / tsuki ni kokoro no / sumi sumite / hate wa kai ni ka / naran to suran

With no destination,
my heart dwells
with the clear moon,
to what end
I do not know
--dlb

Limitations gone:
since my mind fixed on the moon,
clarity and serenity
make something for which
there's no end in sight.
--LaFleur, *Awesome Nightfall*, 87

Works Cited (for both “Selected Waka” and “Selected Poems by Saigyō”)

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