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# Spirit Pacification in Imperial *Waka* Anthologies

## The *Senzai wakashū* and *Shinkokin wakashū*

For imperial *waka* anthologies (*chokusenshū*), the first and foremost purpose of compilation was to extol the reign of the emperor who commissioned the collection. However, as times changed, spirit pacification (*chinkon*) also came to be included in the rubric of compilation. This article examines the process by which spirit pacification came to take on such an important role in these collections, and how this goal was achieved in particular imperial anthologies. Specifically, the article focuses on the *Senzai wakashū*, which was the first of the imperial anthologies to include spirit pacification among its major themes, as well as the *Shinkokin wakashū*, which distinguishes itself from other imperial anthologies in the way the subject matter of spirit pacification was executed.

KEYWORDS: imperial *waka* anthology—spirit pacification—*Senzai wakashū*—*Shinkokin wakashū*—Saigyō—Jien

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In imperial *waka* anthologies (*chokusenshū* 勅撰集), whose primary purpose is to extol the reign of the emperor, Lament Poems (*banka* 挽歌) usually do not focus on the departed but describe the sorrow of those left behind or console the bereaved. They are to celebrate the peace and tranquility of the world of the living, and as such, there is little need to include poems that pacify the spirits of those belonging to the world of the dead. However, a major purpose for the compilation of the *Senzai wakashū*, the seventh imperial anthology compiled toward the end of the Heian period, was spirit pacification (*chinkon* 鎮魂). As for the next imperial anthology, the *Shinkokin wakashū*, the inclusion of a great number of poems by Saigyō 西行 (1118–1190) and Jien 慈円 (1155–1225), two representative poets of the time who were both Buddhist monks, adds a strong awareness of the past, death, and impermanence to the whole collection, and poems that hint at salvation demonstrate a desire to pacify the spirits of the dead as well as of society itself. This article examines the process through which spirit pacification became a part of the compilatory rubric of imperial *waka* anthologies and provides a detailed analysis of how such an effort was carried out, arguing that the inclusion of spirit pacification as a major theme in imperial *waka* anthologies was the result of the specific historical context in which these collections came about.

## *Death, Songs, and Spirit Pacification*

In Japan, there has been an intimate connection between death and songs from ancient times. The *Gishi wajinden* states that in the land of Yamato, on the occasion of someone's death, the chief mourner would "cry aloud" while others would "sing, dance, and drink wine."[1] The section on Emperor Keikō 景行 (d.u.) in book two of the *Kojiki* also recounts how, after Prince Yamato Takeru 倭 健命 died and turned into a giant white bird, his consorts and children wept and chased after him as they sang four songs (SNKBZ 1: 235–237). The reason for this association between death and songs may be due to the belief that songs have the power to cross the boundary between life and death and communicate with the spirits of the dead. As stated in the "Kana Preface" to the *Kokin wakashū* (hereafter

1. This passage from the *Gishi wajinden* can be found at https://shoryobu.kunaicho.go.jp/Toshoryo/Detail/1000067540025.

*Kokinshū*), Japanese poetry (*waka*) has the power to effortlessly move heaven and earth and to stir the emotions of even the invisible spirits.[2]

In the *Man'yōshū*, Lament Poems constitute one of the collection's three major categories, aside from Various Poems (*zōka* 雑歌) and Correspondence (*sōmon* 相聞). According to TAKAKUWA Emiko (2016, 39), these Lament Poems are not simply about death itself, but rather their primary purpose is to pacify the spirits of the dead through the act of establishing direct communication with them, asking about their wishes in an attempt to fulfill them. The group of Self-Lament Poems by Prince Arima 有間 (640–658) that is found at the beginning of book 2 of the *Man'yōshū* is a good example. Prince Arima was a tragic figure who was suspected of treason, exiled to Kii 紀伊 Province, and was subsequently hanged at Fujishiro 藤白 Hill. One of his poems reads:

| | |
|---|---|
| *Iwashiro no* | Tying a knot |
| *hamamatsu ga e o* | on a branch of the pine tree |
| *hikimusubi* | on the shore at Iwashiro, |
| *masakiku araba* | I vow to return to see it once more, |
| *mata kaeri mimu* | should fortune be on my side. |
| | (*Man'yōshū*, no. 141) |

In this poem, Prince Arima expresses his wish to return to the spot where he tied a knot on a pine branch to survive the ordeal awaiting him. In response, poets of later generations composed poems upon seeing the tied pine branch. One such example is the following by Yamanoue no Okura 山上憶良 (ca. 660–733):

| | |
|---|---|
| *amagakeri* | Perhaps your spirit, |
| *ari kayoitsutsu* | like the free bird traversing the sky, |
| *miramedomo* | has come back to see the pine branch— |
| *hito koso shirane* | unbeknownst to us humans, |
| *matsu wa shiru ramu* | but the pine tree surely would know |
| | (*Man'yōshū*, no. 145) |

In his poem, Okura expresses his sympathy with Prince Arima's regret and affirms that the prince's spirit has certainly returned to the pine tree once again—that is, his wish has been fulfilled—thereby pacifying the spirit of the tragic prince. It is precisely because songs and poems are believed to have the power to communicate with the spirits of the dead that it is possible for Okura to come up with the concept and expressions found in this poem.

2. The phrasing of the relevant passage from the "Kana Preface" of the *Kokinshū* is heavily based on the "Grand Preface" to the *Shi jing* 詩経. The word used here to refer to the spirits is *onigami* 鬼神, which, according to Ōtō Tokihiko 大藤時彦, specifically means "spirits of the dead that are revered as gods" (https://japanknowledge.com/lib/display/?lid=1001000062291).

However, this intimate connection between death and songs/poems in the *Man'yōshū* underwent a complete transformation in the early tenth century with the compilation of the first imperial anthology, the *Kokinshū*. Looking at the poems on the topic of death found in the Lament category of the *Kokinshū*, one mostly finds poems where the poet expresses their own grief or wishes upon encountering someone's death, poems on the impermanence of things, poems consoling the bereaved, or poems expressing the emotional turmoil of those who are facing death themselves.

For example, the first poem in book 16, Lament Poems (*aishōka* 哀傷歌), is the following by Ono no Takamura 小野 篁 (802–853), composed on the occasion of his sister's death:

| | |
|---|---|
| *naku namida* | Would that my flowing tears |
| *ame to furanamu* | were falling like the rain, |
| *watarigawa* | so that the water would surge |
| *mizu masarinaba* | in the River of Crossing, |
| *kaerikuru gani* | and my sister would return. |

(SKT 1: no. 829)

This poem expresses the poet's grief upon the death of his sister, as well as his wish for his tears to turn into a torrential rain, so that it would be impossible for his sister's spirit to cross the Sanzu River and she would thus return to him.

Another example is a condolence poem by Mibu no Tadamine 壬生忠岑 (ca. 860–920) for someone in mourning, expressing his sympathy with the bereaved who is grieving (SKT 1: no. 843). There are also poems from the point of view of someone who is dying and expressing their concern for those who are left behind (SKT 1: nos. 857, 858), but there are no poems that directly interact with the dead or respond to their regrets or wishes in an attempt to pacify their spirits.[3] The closest one may get to observing any sort of communion with the spirits of the dead may be poems where the poetic persona looks at the mementos or historic remains of the dead and reminisces about the olden days, usually borrowing images of smoke or clouds (SKT 1: nos. 852, 853).

For the most part, this style of Lament Poems found in the *Kokinshū* was adopted in later imperial anthologies. In other words, Lament Poems in imperial anthologies are not often directed toward the dead, but rather they are expres-

3. The disappearance of poems on the subject of pacifying the dead may partly be attributed to a transformation in the ancient notion of "the other world," leading to a definite separation between the living and the dead. Even in the latter part of the *Man'yōshū*, Lament Poems began to change, with the poetic expression turning toward demonstrating the poetic persona's own feeling of sadness that occurs as a result of trying to establish a communion with the spirits of the dead (TAKAKUWA 2016). Such changes in the history of poetic expressions undoubtedly influenced the content of the poems themselves.

sions of the grief experienced by the living who had a close brush with death, deploration of the impermanence of the world, condolences for the bereaved, or the universal sentiment of death as the final destination at which everyone must eventually arrive.

This tendency in Lament Poems is because imperial anthologies are, first and foremost, collections of public poems (*hare no uta* 晴の歌) that are meant to extol the reign of the emperors who commissioned the anthologies. The most important purpose of an imperial anthology is to demonstrate that the peace and abundant nature enjoyed throughout this world, where all living beings experience all of their joys and sorrows, as well as new encounters and (sometimes eternal) partings, are all thanks to the ruler's virtue and grace. Even though the "Kana Preface" to the *Kokinshū* states that poems have the power to move the spirits of the dead, one may argue that from the perspective of imperial anthologies, the spirits of the dead belong to a world completely separate from that of the living, where the virtue and grace of the ruler does not reach. As such, regardless of what actual power poems may hold, there is no need for poems in imperial anthologies to pacify the individual spirits of the dead.[4] However, pacifying the spirits of the dead finally became a major goal of the compilation process for the seventh imperial anthology, the *Senzai wakashū* (hereafter *Senzaishū*), that appeared toward the end of the Heian period.

## *Imperial Waka Anthologies and Spirit Pacification: The Experiments of the Senzaishū*

Maruya Saiichi (2014a) was one of the first scholars to point out the connection between the compilation of the *Senzaishū* and the theme of spirit pacification. Maruya posited that Retired Emperor Go Shirakawa 後白河 (1127–1192) had planned for an imperial anthology to serve as a means to soothe the vengeful spirit of his brother, Retired Emperor Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164), a *waka* aficionado who was defeated in the Hōgen Rebellion (Hōgen no ran 保元の乱) of 1156, exiled to Sanuki 讃岐, and eventually died there. Go Shirakawa appointed the task of compiling the anthology to Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114–1204), for whom Sutoku was a great patron. The anthology served as a spiritual offering not only for Sutoku but also for all of those who lost their lives during the period

4. Notably, in book 10, Miscellaneous 2 (*zō ge* 雑下) of the *Kin'yō wakashū* (hereafter *Kin'yōshū*), a poem composed by Taguchi Shigeyuki 田口重如 (d.u.) on the occasion of his imminent death that expresses his wish to be reborn in paradise (*Kin'yōshū*, no. 646), is followed by a poem by Minamoto no Toshiyori 源 俊頼 (1055–1129) (*Kin'yōshū*, no. 647). The deliberate juxtaposition of these two poems facilitates the interpretation of Toshiyori's poem as a direct response to Shigeyuki's, assuring the former that his wish to be reborn in paradise would be fulfilled, thereby pacifying the spirit of the dying man. However, it is important to note that in this case, Shigeyuki is simply on his deathbed and has not yet joined the world of the dead.

following the Hōgen Rebellion, the Heiji Rebellion (Heiji no ran 平治の乱) of 1160, and the Genpei 源平 War (1180–1185).[5] Taniyama Shigeru (1976) postulates that Go Shirakawa came up with the idea of compiling the *Senzaishū* "as an offering for Sutoku" and "as part of a political measure against the Taira clan."

How did it become possible for an imperial anthology, whose top priority was to extol the reign of the commissioner, to include spirit pacification as part of its goals, and how exactly did it fulfill that mission? The answer largely has to do with the historical context in which the *Senzaishū* came about. Around the time the idea for the *Senzaishū* was conceived, Sutoku was widely believed to be a vengeful spirit (*onryō* 怨霊) who was wreaking havoc and causing many calamities.[6] In the popular imagination, vengeful spirits are those spirits that do not stay in their own separate world and whose powers have bearings on the world of the living. As these vengeful spirits posed a threat to society in the social consciousness, one may imagine that the compilers of an imperial anthology could not simply ignore their presence while putting together a collection of poetry that extolled the peace and affluence of the current reign. As such, it was necessary for spirit pacification to become part of the compilatory rubric as well.

How, then, did the *Senzaishū* compiler accomplish the unprecedented task of weaving the theme of spirit pacification into the fabric of an imperial poetry anthology? After all, Go Shirakawa was the very person who was responsible for banishing Sutoku to Sanuki and effectively causing his death. Go Shirakawa's involvement can be seen in the fact that the prototype for the *Senzaishū* was actually one of Fujiwara no Shunzei's private poetry anthologies.

According to Matsuno Yōichi, the *Senzaishū*'s predecessor was the *Sangodaishū* 三五代集, a private anthology that Shunzei compiled during the reign of Emperor Takakura 高倉 (1161–1181), before he was appointed as compiler of the *Senzaishū* for the purpose of pacifying the spirit of the late Sutoku. With the approval of Go Shirakawa, Shunzei put the *Sangodaishū* to good use when compiling the *Senzaishū*, adopting its general stance on *waka* and its overall theme of pacifying the spirit of Sutoku (Katano and Matsuno 1993; Matsuno 1994). In other words, it was possible for the *Senzaishū* to include spirit pacification precisely because it could use the "excuse" that the spirit pacification aspect was simply inherited from Shunzei's private anthology. It was due to this special

5. Maruya's essay first appeared in the August 1975 issue of *Shinchō* 新潮 and was republished in Maruya (2014a). In a later essay published in the January 1986 issue of *Kaien* 海燕 and republished in Maruya (2014b), Maruya put forth the theory that the *Kokinshū* also aimed to pacify the spirit of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903) as one of its main goals. However, as I argue, this theory does not hold up when one takes into account the fact that the connection between the *Senzaishū* and the theme of spirit pacification has its beginning in private acts of compiling poetry collections.

6. The *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 contains a reference to Sutoku's vengeful spirit (Yamada 2001).

circumstance of compilation, as well as the peculiarity of the individuals involved, that the *Senzaishū* managed to be different from all of its predecessors.

During the process of transforming Shunzei's private anthology into an imperial anthology, various details were added to remind the reader of the drastic social changes that occurred within this timeframe, namely the civil conflicts that began with the Hōgen Rebellion and continued to the Genpei War, the rise of the warrior class, and the many natural disasters that befell the country. At the same time, subtle care was taken in the collection to extol the reign of Go Shirakawa at every turn. Still, when one looks at the circumstances of the compilation of the *Senzaishū*, it is clear that pacification of the spirit of Sutoku was of the utmost importance.

How did the *Senzaishū* accomplish its goal of pacifying the spirits of Sutoku? In the Lament Poems volume of the collection, there are no poems that directly address the death of Sutoku, who died in a state of great resentment; the pacification effort was carried out in much subtler ways. The collection contains a total of twenty-three poems by Sutoku, making him the poet with the fourth most poems included, after Minamoto no Toshiyori 源 俊頼 (1055–1129), Shunzei, and Fujiwara no Mototoshi 藤原基俊 (1060–1142). Having one's poems included in an imperial anthology was a matter of great pride for a poet, so the fact that many of Sutoku's poems were chosen for the anthology may already be considered a spiritual offering for the late emperor by means of honoring his poetic achievements. One may also observe that the inclusion of many poems from the *Kyūan hyakushu* 久安百首, a collection of hundred-poem sequences that was compiled under Sutoku's command—with Shunzei being in charge of the poetic categories—may be a reflection of Sutoku's desire to revise the *Shika wakashū* 詞花和歌集 (the imperial anthology that was compiled at Sutoku's behest), a wish that was left unfulfilled upon his exile. Furthermore, among the poems composed by Sutoku that were chosen to be included in the *Senzaishū*, there are those such as the following, which was composed for the Travel (*kiryo* 羇旅) section of the *Kyūan hyakushu*:

| | |
|---|---|
| *matsu ga ne no* | With the roots of the pine tree |
| *makura mo nani ka* | pillowing my head— |
| *adanaran* | what is so fleeting about that? |
| *tama no yuka to te* | Even the most beautifully decorated bed |
| *tsune no toko ka wa* | shall not last forever. |

(SKT 1: no. 510)

The poem almost reads as a prophecy for Sutoku's own circumstances after the rebellion, and it serves to evoke great sympathy toward Sutoku in the reader.

Aside from pacifying the spirit of Sutoku, another major goal of the *Senzaishū* is to pacify the spirit of the age itself. Toward that goal, the collection includes

many poems by those from the Taira 平 clan (although the poets are all anonymous). These poems allude to the fate of the clan through details that evoke the rise and fall of the Taira, and there are also several poems that are clearly composed by those who were exiled due to various circumstances after the Hōgen Rebellion, even though the poets are not mentioned by name. By including poems by these individuals, the collection not only honors them but also encourages the reader to feel sympathy for them. One example is the famous poem by Taira no Tadanori 平 忠度 (1144–1184), who was the governor of Satsuma 薩摩 Province (listed under anonymous):

| | |
|---|---|
| *sazanami ya* | The former capital at Shiga, |
| *Shiga no miyako wa* | with its rippling waves, |
| *arenishi o* | has fallen completely into ruins, |
| *mukashi nagara no* | but oh, the mountain cherry blossoms |
| *yamazakura kana* | are still as beautiful as the olden days. |

(SKT 1: no. 66)

This poem was composed on the topic of "cherry blossoms at the old capital" (*furusato no hana* 故郷花) and does not directly concern itself with any actual historical event, but looking at it from the perspective of someone who has gone through all of the upheavals brought about by the war, one may interpret the poem as a reflection of the passage of time and find within it something that evokes the line: "The country has fallen, but the mountains and rivers are still there" from the poem "A Spring View" (*Chun wang* 春望) by Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770). This may be counted among the poems that are meant to offer solace to the spirit of the age and mourn for the defeated Taira clan.

Furthermore, the *Senzaishū* is the first imperial anthology where the number of poets who are Buddhist monks exceeds that of female poets, constituting as much as 22 percent of the total number of poets, and Ariyoshi Tamotsu (2009) observes that this peculiar configuration gives the whole collection a strongly religious tone. It does not necessarily mean that the poems by these poets all have a religious theme, but the presence of such a large number of poets who are Buddhist monks in the collection may, to a certain extent, be connected to the spirit pacification aspect of the *Senzaishū*.

With the *Senzaishū* thus setting the precedent for having spirit pacification as one of its main goals of compilation, later imperial anthologies also came to embrace spirit pacification as part of their agenda when the sociohistorical context called for it. Moreover, rather than employing the *Senzaishū*'s tactic of masterfully including poems composed by or connected with those whose spirits were meant to be pacified as a way to honor them, one anthology in particular had a completely different approach: the *Shinkokin wakashū* (hereafter the

*Shinkokinshū*), the eighth imperial anthology, compiled a mere seventeen years after the *Senzaishū*.

### *The Shinkokinshū's Method of Spirit Pacification*

Before considering the *Shinkokinshū*, it is first necessary to look at other imperial anthologies that follow the *Senzaishū*'s precedent in handling the subject of spirit pacification. For example, the tenth imperial anthology, *Shokugosen wakashū* 続後撰和歌集, which was commissioned by Retired Emperor Go Saga 後嵯峨 (1220–1272) in 1251, features many poems by retired emperors Go Toba 後鳥羽 (1180–1239), Tsuchimikado 土御門 (1196–1231), who was Go Saga's father, and Juntoku 順徳 (1197–1242), all of whom were exiled after the Jōkyū Rebellion (Jōkyū no ran 承久の乱) in 1221, as well as poems by those who were involved with the rebellion. One may argue that by strategically including these poems at various junctures in the collection, the compiler, Nijō no Tameie 二条為家 (1198–1275), effectively gives voice to the exiled poets to lament their fates and invites the reader to sympathize with them, thus fulfilling the pacifying purpose of the collection (Tabuchi 2001; Satō 2017).

Another example is the eighteenth imperial anthology, *Shinsenzai wakashū* 新千載和歌集, which was commissioned by Emperor Go Kōgon 後光厳 (1338–1374) at the request of Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358) and compiled by Nijō no Tamesada 二条為定 (ca. 1293–1360) in 1359. This was the first time an imperial anthology was compiled at the request of an Ashikaga shogun, and this was not only due to Takauji's love for *waka*: the collection itself, which contains as many as twenty-four poems composed by Emperor Go Daigo 後醍醐 (1288–1339) and many others extolling his reign in the Congratulations (*keiga* 慶賀) volume, was also meant to serve the purpose of pacifying the late emperor, who was believed to have turned into a vengeful spirit running rampant and causing social unrest (Fukatsu 2005). Both of these anthologies have their own strategy and neither is a carbon copy of the *Senzaishū*. However, they do share two important traits with the *Senzaishū*: from the perspective of the commissioners and compilers of these anthologies, the targets of spirit pacification were specific individuals, and the main method of pacification was the inclusion of poems composed by these individuals or having something to do with them in terms of the content.

In contrast, the *Shinkokinshū*—and by extension, its commissioner, Retired Emperor Go Toba—does not have any specific target of pacification. Moreover, the version of the anthology that was later revised by Go Toba was certainly a collection that exemplified his own reign, its main purpose being to extol his own rule and to wish for the perpetual continuation of the court and the imperial line, as well as the return of imperial power. Up until now, the *Shinkokinshū* has not been considered an imperial anthology with an emphasis on spirit pacification.

However, I argue that spirit pacification is indeed part of the rubric for the compilation of this anthology; specifically, the target of pacification here is not any specific individual, but rather the spirit of the entire preceding age. In other words, Go Toba sought to make the anthology the cornerstone for the prosperity of his own reign by (1) acknowledging the greatly impoverished social condition that was the result of all the wars that occurred during the fifty years between the Hōgen Rebellion and the compilation of the *Shinkokinshū*, and (2) by praying for the peace of all those who became victims while at the same time pacifying the vengeful spirits who were believed to be either the direct or indirect cause of the disturbed the social order. This line of thought is consistent with the general effort to pacify the spirits of the dead after the Hōgen Rebellion that continued well into the Kenkyū 建久 era (1190–1198), when Go Toba was on the throne.[7]

How did the *Shinkokinshū* accomplish its goal of spirit pacification when the target of the pacifying act was not an individual but something vague like the spirit of a whole age and of society itself? The two poets with the most poems in the collection are Saigyō and Jien, both of whom were famous Buddhist monks who represent the previous generation (in Saigyō's case) and Go Toba's own generation (in Jien's case). Their poems make up nearly 10 percent of the total number of poems and are distributed throughout the collection; the content covers a wide range of topics, with many having to do with death, reminiscing about the past, lamenting the impermanence of this world, worrying about the plight of the living, and general thoughts about life in seclusion, all of which highlight the many sorrows to be found in this "wretched world" (*uki yo* 憂き世).

One example in the Miscellaneous 2 (*zō ge*) volume contains a cluster of poems on the topic of impermanence (*mujō* 無常) that are arranged in groups by association, and this cluster contains thirteen poems by Saigyō and sixteen poems by Jien (Ariyoshi 1968). Of particular interest is that within this cluster, there is a sub-group of poems on grievances (*jukkaika* 述懐歌) by these two religious figures that exhibit a strong awareness of time, including the past, present, and future. The poems in this sub-group are as follows:

7. The *Daisenpōin jōjō kishōji hotsuganmon* 大懺法院條々起請事発願文, which Jien wrote one year after the compilation of the *Shinkokinshū* in 1206, states: "In the current chaotic state of the world after the Hōgen Rebellion, vengeful spirits run rampant throughout the land, and dead soldiers are found across the four seas," and prayers were thus offered at the Daisenpōin 大懺法院 in order to "salvage those vengeful spirits and aid the imperial family" (DNS 4: 279). Given that Jien was Go Toba's protector monk (*gojisō* 護持僧), the fact that he found it important enough to establish the Daisenpōin and offer prayers to save the souls of the dead and pacify the vengeful spirits in order to support the ruling family must have had no small influence on the philosophy of the *Shinkokinshū*, which was commissioned by Go Toba (Yoshino 2015).

Unknown context

*omowanedo*
*yo o somukan to*
*iu hito no*
*onaji kazu ni ya*
*ware mo naruran*

Will I become just another
of those people who say
they plan to leave the world behind
even when in their hearts,
they do not truly mean it?
(SKT 1: no. 1747)

Former Major Archbishop Jien

*kazu naranu*
*mi o mo kokoro no*
*mochigao ni*
*ukarete wa mata*
*kaeri kinikeri*

Though I am someone of no import,
it seems that my heart—
as if finding my own self worthy to call home,
does eventually return,
no matter the distance it goes.
(SKT 1: no. 1748)

Master of the Law Saigyō

*orokanaru*
*kokoro no hiku ni*
*makasetemo*
*sate sa wa ikani*
*tsui no omoi wa*

I may leave it up
to my foolish heart,
letting it take me wherever it may,
but then, what will I think
during those final moments?
(SKT 1: no. 1749)

*toshitsuki o*
*ikade wagami ni*
*okuriken*
*kinō no hito mo*
*kyō wa naki yo ni*

How have I spent
all of these passing years?
In this fleeting world
where a person may be here one day
and be gone the next.
(SKT 1: no. 1750)

*ukegataki*
*hito no sugata ni*
*ukabi idete*
*korizu ya tare mo*
*mata shizumu beki*

Being reborn as a human
and rising up from hell
is such a miraculous feat,
and yet, are we all going to fall again,
not learning anything from our previous
lives? (SKT 1: no. 1751)

Of the last three in this group of five poems by Jien and Saigyō, in the first one (no. 1749), the poetic persona reflects on his own emotions at the time of his death after having let his foolish heart dictate his life; in the second one (no. 1750), he questions the way in which he has spent his life, when the world is so impermanent and full of changes; and in the last one (no. 1751), he laments human fate: despite having been born as a human, it seems to be in man's nature

to learn nothing from his previous lives for he keeps committing sins, only to once again fall into hell and reincarnate through the six realms. Thus, the first poem focuses on a point in one's future (the time of one's death), the second focuses on both the past (the life one has led up until that point) and the present (when the poetic persona thinks back on the past), and the third once again shifts the focus to the future (when one goes to hell for one's sins).

Furthermore, in the Kami Poems (*jingika* 神祇歌) volume of the collection, there are poems that express the author's faith in the authority and blessing of the deities who help uphold the peacefulness of the present world while also recalling the remote past (SKT 1: nos. 1878, 1904). In the Buddhist Poems (*shakkyōka* 釈教歌) volume, there are poems by Jien that take on the role of explaining in simple terms the gist of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which is considered a means of saving all living beings (SKT 1: nos. 1941–1944, 1950). The last poem in this volume—a position that is usually highly regarded—is one by Saigyō where the poet talks about his premonition regarding his own death, thereby taking on the role of guiding all living beings to the Western Pure Land (SKT 1: no. 1987). In other words, through the use of the poetry by these two religious figures, the *Shinkokinshū* proves itself to be a poetry collection that has a clear awareness of the past and the notion of death as well as the impermanence of this world. Furthermore, by showing how salvation can be achieved through these poems, the collection clearly demonstrates its goal of soothing the past and the souls of the dead: in other words, of spirit pacification.

Saigyō originally served as an imperial guard for Retired Emperor Toba 鳥羽 (1103–1156), and he was also close to Retired Emperor Sutoku. Even after renouncing the world, Saigyō was still sensitive to the decline of imperial rule; at times he would lament it, at others he would express a desire for its restoration, and he also constantly wished for peace in the world. He once went to Sanuki to pacify the spirit of Sutoku. Another time, he headed to the eastern provinces to solicit funds for the restoration of Tōdaiji 東大寺 after the Genpei War. He also compiled a poetry contest that was dedicated to Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮 to pray for peace in the world. Saigyō was truly representative of the religious figures of the pre-*Shinkokinshū* generation: someone who lived right in the middle of a turbulent time, who witnessed everything and used that as the inspiration for his poetry, who held the lofty goal of pacifying the spirit of society itself, and who was willing to travel far to offer his prayers where they were needed. As for Jien, he came from a powerful regent family and rose to the position of leader of the Tendai 天台 school, but despite being someone who was upholding the ideals of the religious world at the time, both as a result of his origins and his own status, Jien constantly carried within himself a spiritual conflict. In his personal life, he had experienced various setbacks and misfortunes, and Jien was someone who continuously looked at the state of human existence from his personal point of

view. In short, one may argue that by using two religious figures with different roles and social standings, the *Shinkokinshū* attempted to fulfill its goal of offering prayers for society itself and pacifying the spirit of the preceding age.

Aside from the poems by Saigyō and Jien, the theme of spirit pacification is also evoked in the *Shinkokinshū* by the inclusion of poems by Sugawara no Michizane and Sutoku, who were both feared as vengeful spirits and believed to be the cause of social unrest by the governing body at various junctures in history. A total of sixteen poems by Michizane are included in the collection, the most notable of which are the twelve poems on the subject of his exile that make up the group of poems occupying the beginning of the Miscellaneous 2 volume (SKT 1: nos. 1690–1701). Aside from these twelve, all of his other poems included in the anthology are also allegorical poems lamenting his misfortune. As for Sutoku, he has seven poems included in the anthology, some of which hint at his misfortune (SKT 1: no. 71 in volume 1 of the Spring [*haru no uta jō* 春歌上] volume) or focus on the theme of impermanence and are heavily religious in tone (SKT 1: no. 1945 in the Buddhist Poems volume); the inclusion of these poems by Sutoku may be taken as the compiler's attempt to express sympathy for the late emperor's laments, thereby pacifying his spirit. Furthermore, it should be noted that the beginning of both the Kami Poems and Buddhist Poems volumes includes several poems attributed to gods and buddhas, an unprecedented approach in imperial *waka* anthologies. By showing that even in a world that has become thoroughly impoverished and fallen into ruin, the gods and buddhas still remain connected with human beings through the medium of poetry and are willing to provide salvation, and so the collection demonstrates its goal of soothing and salvaging the human soul.

However, the method of pacification seen in the *Shinkokinshū* was not adopted by later imperial anthologies. After all, this method was possible in the *Shinkokinshū* precisely because of the direct involvement of Go Toba, both in his position as the commissioner of the anthology and as the retired emperor in power (*chiten no kimi* 治天の君), who deeply believed in the power of poems to communicate with the gods and buddhas and who tried to apply that mindset to the collection as a whole.[8] Additionally, the presence of both Saigyō and Jien—

8. During the compilation of the *Shinkokinshū*, Go Toba dedicated many hundred-poem sequences to shrines, including the Ise 伊勢, Kamo 鴨, and Kasuga 春日 shrines, and made his retainers participate. Even before Go Toba showed an interest in poetry, Shunzei had started the practice of dedicating hundred-poem sequences to shrines, such as the *Gosha hyakushu* 五社百首; Go Toba likely took inspiration from Shunzei, but it is worth noting that with these poetic offerings Go Toba was taking a stance: as the ruler of the whole country, he prayed divine protection for his rule and the restoration of imperial power, all through borrowing the power of poetry. Together with the presence of the gods and buddhas and the heavy prayer-like quality of the whole collection, this is a notable aspect of the *Shinkokinshū*.

two outstanding poets and religious figures who are each representative of their generation—is something unique to the *Shinkokinshū* and not replicated in any other imperial anthologies.

*Conclusion*

In this article, I have looked at how the theme of spirit pacification is carried out in different imperial *waka* anthologies. In the *Senzaishū*, the masterful inclusion of poems by poets who were the targets of the act of pacification seamlessly incorporates the theme of spirit pacification into the collection, even though at first glance it may seem incompatible with the primary purpose of imperial anthologies to extol the reign of the commissioning emperor. By contrast, the *Shinkokinshū* attempts to pacify the spirit of society as a whole through the poetry of Saigyō and Jien, two prominent poets and religious figures who were both representative of their own generation. The peculiar method adopted by the *Shinkokinshū* was the combined result of many different factors: the historical context in which peace was being restored after an unprecedented period of prolonged unrest, Go Toba's role as the commissioner and effectively the compiler who deeply believed in the efficacious power of poetry, the presence of outstanding poets who were able to realize Go Toba's ideals, and of course, Saigyō and Jien: the stage was set and the entire cast of characters was assembled for the *Shinkokinshū*.

[Translated by Phuong Ngo]

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DNS *Dai Nihon shiryō* 大日本史料. 12 vols. Ed. Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku Bungakubu Shiryō Hensangakari 東京帝国大学文学部史料編纂掛. Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku, 1901–2016.

SKT *Shinpen kokka taikan* 新編国歌大観. 10 vols. Ed. Shinpen Kokka Taikan Henshū Iinkai 新編国歌大観編集委員会. Kadokawa Shoten, 1983–1992.

SNKBZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Shōgakkan, 1994–2002.

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*Kin'yō wakashū* 金葉和歌集. Comp. Minamoto no Toshiyori 源 俊頼 (1055–1129). SKT 1.

*Kojiki* 古事記. Ō no Yasumaro 太安万侶 (d. 723). In SNKBZ 1.

*Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集. Comp. Ki no Tsurayuki 紀 貫之 (ca. 872–945), Ki no Tomonori 紀 友則 (ca. 845–907), Ōshikōchi no Mitsune 凡河内躬恒 (ca. 859–925), and Mibun no Tadamine 壬生忠岑 (ca. 860–920). In SKT 1.

*Man'yōshū* 万葉集. Comp. Ōtomo no Yakamochi 大伴家持 (ca. 718–785). In *Man'yōshū: Honbun hen* 萬葉集—本文篇, Satake Akihiro 佐竹昭広, Kinoshita Masatoshi 木下正俊, and Kojima Noriyuki 小島憲之, eds. Hanawa Shobō, 1963.

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