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A Neglected Chapter

Courtly Fiction of the Kamakura Period

By DONALD KEENE

THE reputation of the works of fiction composed during the Kamakura period in the tradition of Heian *monogatari* 物語 is by no means high. Few scholars are attracted to what seems to be a barren field, certainly when compared to the *gunki monogatari* 軍記物語 (martial tales), or *setsuwa monogatari* 説話物語 (anecdotal writings) of the same period, and even they are likely to opine that the later examples of courtly fiction are so greatly indebted to *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語 as to be little more than copies. Every instance of influence from *Genji Monogatari* on these works has been painstakingly traced, but the extraordinary dissimilarities are generally passed over in silence or stated without comment, as if the scholar was rather embarrassed to discover that not everything could be explained in terms of imitation. No doubt it is frustrating to deal with works of literature that are known, even before they are read, to be inferior to *Genji Monogatari*. The incomplete state of the texts of some of the best *monogatari* of the Kamakura period also makes it difficult for the rare enthusiast to claim that his particular discovery is *almost* as good as Murasaki Shikibu's 紫式部 masterpiece.

Other problems of a more technical nature are involved when discussing the courtly fiction of the Kamakura period. The surviving texts are not dated, and it is therefore not always clear whether a particular work should be assigned to the Kamakura period or to the late Heian period. There are two external sources of information about the dates of courtly fiction of this period, *Mumyō Zōshi* 無名草子 ('The Tale Without a Name'),¹ a discussion of various *monogatari* by a group of unidentified ladies, written about 1200, and *Fūyō Waka Shū* 風葉和歌集 (or *Fūyōshū*), a collection, compiled in 1271, of poems that originally had appeared in *monogatari*. A work mentioned in *Mumyō Zōshi* must have been written by 1200; if not cited in this work but quoted in *Fūyōshū*, it was presumably composed between 1200 and 1271. This is at best a

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¹ Michele Marra's translation of the work,

published under the title '*Mumyōzōshi*', appeared in MN 39:2-4 (1984).

rough-and-ready method of dating. Even if we can surmise that a *monogatari* was written before 1200, it is unclear how much earlier it might have been. Again, we know that some works were extensively revised; this means that references in either of the two external sources may not be to the present version but to some earlier version of the story.

Internal evidence is even harder to obtain. The writers of courtly fiction deliberately avoided the use of new words or grammatical constructions, rather in the manner that waka poets for a millennium avoided words that had not been mentioned in *Kokinshū* 古今集, and there is virtually no allusion to contemporary events. Works of courtly fiction of the Kamakura period are for this reason often referred to as *giko monogatari* 擬古物語, or pseudo-classical texts, although the appropriateness of this term has been questioned.²

Quite apart from such scholarly problems, the reader of *monogatari* dating from this period is confronted by the inescapable fact that the vast majority of the works whose titles we know from *Mumyō Zōshi* and *Fūyōshū* have been lost entirely or survive only in fragments. It is quite possible that some of the lost stories more clearly revealed than any surviving work that a new age had begun in literature as well as in the domain of politics.

The establishment of the shogun's court in Kamakura unquestionably affected even members of the nobility who remained behind in the old Heian capital. Diaries describe the journeys made by nobles to Kamakura in order to plead at the law courts for the restitution of lands; and some traveled there simply because they were curious to see what the new shogunal capital looked like. The transfer of power from the hands of the aristocrats to those of the warriors must have been deeply disquieting, and during the warfare of the late twelfth century the nobles experienced physical and economic hardships, as we know from various sources. But little in the traditional fiction indicates that important changes had occurred in the lives of the authors.

Works in the courtly tradition of the Kamakura period are for this reason, perhaps even more than for their old-fashioned style, referred to as pseudo-classical. The term is used to mean that the authors were pretending to be writing in an earlier (and happier) age. It should be borne in mind, however, that not even the Heian courtly fiction had been really faithful to its time. Who would guess when reading *Genji Monogatari* or *Yoru no Nezame* 夜の寝覚 ('Awakening at Night') that while their authors were evoking the beauty of a society free from any hint of disorder and ruled by canons of taste rather than by laws, the capital was overrun by bandits who threatened the property and

² See, for example, Ogi Takashi 小木喬, *Kamakura Jidai Monogatari no Kenkyū* 鎌倉時代物語の研究, Yūseidō, 1984, p. 51, where he insists that the term *giko monogatari* is used properly only of works written in archaic

language by scholars of National Learning during the Edo period. Ogi quotes the statement by Kazamaki Keijirō 風巻景次郎 that it is impossible to distinguish *monogatari* of the Heian and Kamakura periods.

even the lives of the aristocrats?³ All the same, the Heian writers persuade us of the truth of their romanticized portrayal of their society. The Kamakura writers, despite their lavish descriptions of the beauty of the world they portray, were not so successful. Indeed, the feature that most clearly distinguishes the courtly fiction of the Kamakura period is the prominence of deviations—conscious or otherwise—from the cult of beauty that had characterized Heian literature during its finest periods.

The decline in the morals of the Heian aristocracy, a conspicuous element in this loss of beauty, began long before the shogunate was established in Kamakura. Accounts exist from the late eleventh century of the craze that swept the aristocracy for *dengaku* 田楽, originally a mimed dance performed by peasants to please the gods of the harvest; in imitation of the rustics, nobles cavorted from house to house either stark naked or wearing nothing more than red loincloths and peasants' hats.⁴ Again, from the middle of the Heian period a 'neuterization' of the men of the court began: they powdered and rouged their faces, and painted eyebrows on their foreheads in the manner of court ladies; and from the early twelfth century it became fashionable for men to wear heavily starched robes that stood out from the wearer in intriguing angular patterns. The original version of *Torikaebaya Monogatari* とりかへばや物語 ('If Only I Could Change Them') was apparently more openly suggestive of sexual deviation than the surviving text. We know, for example, that the Middle Counsellor in the original version gave birth to a child while still dressed in 'his' official court costume, his formally arranged, masculine hairstyle becoming disarrayed under the strain of labor. *Mumyō Zōshi* characterized the descriptions of 'his' monthly periods as 'extremely dirty'.⁵

Yet it is hard to escape the impression that signs of decadence among the aristocrats, evident much earlier, grew increasingly pronounced toward the end of the Heian period. The nobles, deprived by the rising power of the military of almost everything but their titles, consecrated themselves to waka poetry, which became all but a religion in the fervent attention it received, although the poems themselves might be trivial. In inverse proportion to the court's loss of importance as the central organ of administration, ceremony and precedents became matters of fanatical concern.

The chief figure in the literature of the new era was Fujiwara Teika (or

³ Ogi, pp. 54–55, quotes Hara Katsurō's 原勝郎 description of the real appearance of the city of Heian. Robbers roamed the streets not only at night but in broad daylight, and sometimes penetrated even into the imperial palace.

⁴ Imai Gen'e 今井源衛, 'Sōsetsu' 総説, in Mitani Eiichi 三谷栄一 & Imai Gen'e, ed., *Tsutsumi Chūnagon Monogatari, Torikaebaya Monogatari* 堤中納言物語, とりかへばや物語,

Kadokawa, 1976, p. 199. Imai's source is Ogata Kamekichi 尾方亀吉, *Ōchō Engeishi* 王朝演芸史.

A colorful account of the Great *Dengaku* of 1096, and the political reasons behind it, is given in Jacob Raz, *Popular Entertainment and Politics*, in MN 40:3 (1985), pp. 283–98.

⁵ Kuwabara Hiroshi 桑原博史, ed., *Mumyō Zōshi* 無名草子, Shinchōsha, 1976, p. 81. See also Marra, p. 410.

Sadaie) 藤原定家, 1162-1241, the son of the great poet Fujiwara Shunzei (or Toshinari) 藤原俊成, 1114-1204. Teika was in his late twenties at the time of the war between the Taira 平 and the Minamoto 源 that ended in 1185 with the triumph of the latter and the establishment of the shogunate. As the son of the senior poet of the day, and as a poet of outstanding talent, he seemed assured of a career at the court as an authority on waka, but various political incidents (and the extraordinary longevity of his father) kept him from gaining full recognition until Former Emperor Go-Toba appointed him in 1210, when he was thirty-nine, as a member of the Bureau of Poetry (*wakadokoro* 和歌所). Teika's career as a poet has often been discussed; here, only his role as a writer of courtly fiction will be considered.

Matsura-no-Miya Monogatari

Teika's sole surviving work of fiction is the unfinished *Matsura-no-Miya Monogatari* 松浦宮物語 ('The Tale of the Matsura Shrine'), although he apparently wrote others. Our best clues to the authorship and dating come from a brief passage in *Mumyō Zōshi*, where it states, 'The many works composed by Teika, the Lesser Captain, are so exclusively concerned with creating atmosphere that they are utterly lacking in verisimilitude. The poems in *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari* are exactly like those in *Man'yōshū*, and the plot brings to mind *Utsubo*.'⁶ We know that *Mumyō Zōshi* was written in 1200 or 1201, and Teika held the office of *shōshō* 少将, or lesser captain, from 1189 to 1202, strong evidence that he wrote *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari* between 1189 and 1201. At one time doubts were expressed about his authorship, but no scholar now seriously questions the attribution.⁷

It might seem that an extended work by a recognized, even worshipped master of Japanese poetry would command wide attention, but *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari* has been little studied. Its unfinished state undoubtedly has contributed to the neglect, but interest in Teika's writings is largely restricted to his poetry and criticism, and his novel has therefore been as little read as the plays of Browning or Tennyson. The story has been described as an exercise in literary composition: the poems (as the lady of *Mumyō Zōshi* declared) recall *Man'yōshū*, at least in the first book, although elsewhere Teika experimented with later styles of waka. He borrowed directly from *Utsubo Monogatari* 宇津保物語 ('The Tale of the Hollow Tree') when creating his hero and in the emphasis he gave to music as an element of the plot, and he was probably indebted to *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari* 浜松中納言物語 ('The Tale of the Hamamatsu Captain') for setting much of the story in China. Teika was not merely recounting an entertaining tale but demonstrating his familiarity with the literature of the past and his ability to create in a variety of styles.

⁶ Kuwabara, p. 98; Marra, p. 418.

⁷ Hagitani Boku 萩谷朴, ed., *Matsura-no-*

miya Monogatari 松浦宮物語, Kadokawa, 1970, p. 293.

One influence is conspicuous by its absence—that of *Genji Monogatari*. Teika deliberately set his work in the distant past, before the capital was established at Nara (and, naturally, long before *Genji Monogatari*). It opens, ‘Long ago, when the capital was at Fujiwara, Tachibana no Fuyuaki, a Major Counsellor of the Senior Third Rank who also served as General of the Palace Guards, had an only son by the Imperial Princess Asuka.’⁸ The Fujiwara capital lasted for three reigns, from 694 to 710, immediately before Nara was made the first permanent capital. The title *chūe no taishō* 中衛大將 (rendered here as ‘General of the Palace Guards’) is found in *Man’yōshū* and other early documents, but no longer existed in the Heian period; it served here to confirm the period of the work.⁹ By going back to *Man’yōshū* and *Utsubo Monogatari*, Teika was in effect refusing the possibility of influence from the later *Genji Monogatari*. Perhaps Teika, a man of action (as we can judge from an incident in 1185 when he was deprived of ranks and offices for having struck a superior), was attempting to return in his work to a more vigorous period of Japanese history; the story certainly stands apart from more typical examples of archaistic fiction that insist on the beauty and sensitivity of the heroes to the exclusion of specifically masculine traits.

Ben no Shōshō 弁少將, the hero of *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari*, displayed his outstanding qualities even as a small boy. We are told that he excelled others in his looks and, as he grew up, ‘it became apparent that he was no less remarkable in intelligence and disposition. His father, it needs hardly be said, was delighted, and people of the time praised the child as the glory of an unremarkable age.’¹⁰ When seven years old the boy demonstrated his proficiency at composing poetry in Chinese, and there was not a literary art in which he did not excel. Hearing of this prodigy, the emperor summoned the boy and set him a topic for a poem as a test of his ability; the boy, without the least hesitation, composed a splendid poem on the assigned topic. He later studied stringed and wind instruments, and was able to play even the most difficult pieces better than his teacher.

Thus far we have been given more or less the standard description of the hero of a Heian *monogatari*. The first departure from convention comes with the statement that Ben no Shōshō, unlike most young men, was severely disciplined in his habits and seemed uninterested in romance. The self-discipline would serve him well later in the novel, when he (in contrast to the heroes of Heian court fiction) is required to demonstrate his prowess on the battlefield. But the lack of interest in romance is only apparent. As a matter of fact, he is deeply in love with Princess Kannabi 神奈備, an extraordinarily

⁸ Hagitani, p. 9.

⁹ Hagitani, p. 9, states that this title was in fact not used during the Fujiwara period; but in any case it suggested a bureaucracy unlike that of the Heian period.

¹⁰ Hagitani, p. 9. I have followed Hagitani, p. 125, in his interpretation of *imijiki yo* as ‘an unremarkable age’, although it would be more usual to take it as ‘an extraordinary age’.

beautiful young woman, and desperately wants to make her his wife, but the princess offers him no encouragement. When he summons up the courage to reach inside her screen-of-state to take her hand, she runs away in fright, and to the poem he sends describing his burning love she sends a frosty reply in which she declines to be consumed in the flames of his passion.

This rejection naturally depresses Ben no Shōshō, but soon afterward he is informed that he has been chosen by command of the emperor to sail for China as second-in-command of an embassy. His parents are delighted at this mark of imperial favor, but Ben no Shōshō sheds ‘tears of blood’ when he learns that Princess Kannabi has been taken into the palace, possibly as a concubine for the emperor, who shows her every affection. Greatly dejected, he composes a poem in which he expresses the hope that he will vanish into the clouds of faraway China. At the farewell banquet, prior to the departure of the embassy, Ben no Shōshō receives a poem from Kannabi urging him not to disappear into the clouds of China but to return safely to Japan. She says that her heart will go with him, the first kind words he has received. Ben no Shōshō never lets this letter from his person.

He departs for the ‘border’—the harbor of Matsura in Kyushu from which the embassy is to sail for China. His mother insists on accompanying him there, and declares that she will stay in Matsura until he returns. Although the mother’s decision to remain in Matsura—recalling Sayo-hime 佐用姫 who waited there for her husband to return from Korea, waving her scarf so long that she finally turned to stone—is not one of the central incidents of the story, for some reason the place-name Matsura was chosen for the title of the work.

After a voyage lasting just a week, the ship bearing the Japanese embassy arrives at Ningpo, where they are welcomed by local officials with whom they exchange poems in Chinese. Apart from poetry, everything in China is unfamiliar, but the Japanese are impressed by the quality of the officials even in a place so remote from the capital; China is evidently a country of great culture.¹¹

After many hardships the Japanese reach the capital and are granted an audience by the emperor. The members of the embassy join their hosts in making music and composing poetry. The emperor is especially impressed by Ben no Shōshō, and insists that the young man (he was then seventeen) remain by his side. Some Chinese are annoyed by Ben no Shōshō’s mastery of every art, which quite put them to shame, and other remonstrate with the emperor, pointing out how unusual it is for a foreigner, especially for one so young, to be admitted to the imperial presence. But the emperor puts an end to the discussion by citing the instance of a foreigner who was favored by the ancient Emperor Han Wu Ti 漢武帝.

Concerned lest Ben no Shōshō be bored at his court, the emperor arranges

¹¹ Hagitani, p. 23.

for beautiful dancing girls to perform for him, but the young Japanese, not in the least tempted, spends every night alone. The Chinese are impressed: they had not expected that he would display such self-control.¹²

One night Ben no Shōshō hears the sound of a *kin* 琴, a Chinese lute, being played so magnificently that he searches until he finds the player, a man of eighty years. The old man expresses joy over meeting a Japanese, and says that he knew Ben no Shōshō would visit him that night.¹³ He reveals that there is in China one *kin* player even superior to himself, Princess Hua-yang 華陽, and he urges Ben no Shōshō to study with her. But, he warns, the Japanese must abandon any wayward thoughts before he meets her; although she seems like other women, she has in fact come to this world only temporarily, and the *kin* melodies she plays were learned in the other world. The old man predicts that they will not meet again: he has not long to live and a great rebellion will soon sweep over the country. He gives Ben no Shōshō his *kin* and tells him how to reach Mt Shang, where the princess lives.

Ben no Shōshō climbs the mountain, guided by the sound of the princess's music. He is dazzled by his first glimpse of the lady; compared to her, the dancing girls who had entertained him look like so many clay dolls, and even Princess Kannabi seems no more than a country wench.¹⁴ Princess Hua-yang teaches him a secret piece, and they commemorate the occasion by exchanging poems, both in Chinese (not quoted) and Japanese. Her *waka* is:

<i>kumo ni fuku</i>	That man who has come
<i>kaze mo oyobanu</i>	To visit over the waves
<i>namiji yori</i>	Unreached even by
<i>toikon hito wa</i>	The winds that blow in the clouds—
<i>sora ni shiriniki</i>	I knew of him in heaven.

Ben no Shōshō replies:

<i>kumo no hoka</i>	Have I ever known
<i>tōtsu sakai no</i>	Parting of such great sorrow
<i>kunibito mo</i>	Even when I left
<i>mata ka bakari no</i>	Someone from the distant land
<i>wakare ya wa seshi</i> ¹⁵	Far beyond the clouds' frontier?

The princess tells Ben no Shōshō how she was taught to play the *kin* by an immortal who descended from heaven on the night of the harvest moon many years ago. Ever since then she has spent on the mountain the nights of the full moon during each of the three months of autumn. She promises to see Ben no Shōshō at the time of the next full moon, and she fulfills this promise, teaching

¹² Hagitani, p. 26. The original reads: *Kano kuni no hito wa omoishi yori mo mame narikeri.*

¹³ The passage recalls the first meeting of Kūkai 空海 with his master Hui-kuo 惠果, although it is not clear whether or not Teika

was familiar with Kūkai's work, *Shōrai Mokuroku* 将来目錄, in which the meeting is described.

¹⁴ Hagitani, p. 32.

¹⁵ Hagitani, p. 33.

him the remainder of the secret pieces. He is by this time madly in love with the princess, but she tells him sadly that because of deeds in a previous existence it is forbidden for her to enjoy the pleasures of love.

In the meantime, the emperor falls ill. He predicts his own death and unrest in the country, but takes comfort from Ben no Shōshō's physiognomy that bears the signs of one who will calm disorder in the country. He also predicts his safe return to Japan. Ben no Shōshō has a final meeting with Princess Huayang. She promises that if he really loves her and never forgets her she will be with him in the next life. She gives him a crystal bead, urging him never to let it from his possession even if he encounters terrible storms. He should take it to the Hatsuse Temple in his country and remain there for twenty-one days performing the customary observances before the statue of Kannon. If he does exactly as she describes, they will one day be united.

Soon afterward the princess dies. Her *kin* soars into the sky, returning to its source. The death of the emperor follows the princess's. The country is grief-stricken, but soon a succession dispute breaks out between adherents of the infant crown prince and those of Prince Yen, the younger brother of the late emperor. Prince Yen's forces are so much stronger that many at court turn traitor and desert the crown prince. The plots of various people are exposed and they are put to death. (It is hard to think of any Heian work of literature in which someone is put to death.) The Empress Mother attempts to flee with the crown prince, but desertions from their supporters swell Prince Yen's forces day by day, and there is nowhere to hide but an abandoned temple. Teika's own experiences during the fightings of the 1180s seem to have inspired these descriptions of warfare, but it has been suggested that he was influenced also by accounts of the rebellion of An Lu-shan during the reign of Emperor Ming Huang.¹⁶

The Empress Mother assembles the few ministers who are still loyal and asks for their counsels, but no one has any suggestion to offer. All tremble with fear at the prospect of encountering the enemy general, Yu-wen Hui 宇文会,¹⁷ who is described as looking like a man but having the heart of a tiger. In desperation, the empress asks the help of Ben no Shōshō; she has heard that although Japan is a small country its men are brave and it enjoys the protection of the gods. Ben no Shōshō has had no experience of war, but he cannot bring himself to abandon the empress, and he agrees to defend China.

Ben no Shōshō's army numbers only some fifty or sixty men, but he prays for help to the buddhas and gods of his native country. He really needs help: the enemy numbers some 30,000 men. There follows an account of the fighting

¹⁶ Hagitani, p. 45.

¹⁷ Hagitani, p. 48.

Yu-wen Hui is not an historical personage but, as Hagitani points out, several men with the same surname appear in Chinese histories.

All of them were foreigners who were naturalized as Chinese; this may be an indication that the intended model was An Lu-shan 安祿山.

quite without precedent in courtly fiction. Ben no Shōshō orders his men to set fires on all sides of the enemy, who, caught by surprise, rush toward the sea, where Ben no Shōshō confronts the enemy general. He fires an arrow that passes through Yu-wen Hui's armor, but this tiger of a man not only continues to fight but surrounds Ben no Shōshō with his men. It seems as if the Japanese will surely perish, but suddenly four men who look exactly like him and are mounted on identical horses with identical fittings come to his rescue. Yu-wen Hui falls back, only to be surrounded by five more identical men who slash him down. His army of 30,000 men, intimidated by this prodigy, loses its will to fight.

Several other battles bring complete victory to the loyalist forces. Having accomplished his mission, Ben no Shōshō deferentially returns to the empress his office of commanding general, saying he is young, inexperienced, and a foreigner,¹⁸ but the empress refuses to accept his resignation. The whole country is now at peace. The traitors have been punished and prosperity has returned. The empress reveals that, to her great shame, she almost became a prisoner. If this had happened, she would have killed herself, but she escaped this fate solely thanks to Ben no Shōshō. She feels that she should turn over the country to him to govern because he obviously enjoys the favor of the Japanese gods. But he has only one wish: to return to Japan. He explains that he must serve his parents, but agrees to allow the empress, who is most reluctant to let him go, to decide the time of his departure.

At first the empress reminds Ben no Shōshō of his mother, but their relationship imperceptibly changes. She sings him a Japanese poem about the moon, eliciting from the author the query, 'Granted she was very intelligent, how did she happen to learn an old Japanese poem? No doubt he only *thought* she was singing in Japanese.'¹⁹ This curious aside seems to anticipate a question from the reader, but it also enhances the mysterious charm of the empress. Not long afterward Ben no Shōshō, detecting a marvellous fragrance of plum blossoms, cannot resist following it to its source. He finds a beautiful woman whom he takes in his arms, desiring only to die in such bliss. They spend the night together, but she does not utter a word. He has no clue as to her identity, but increasingly it seems as if she might be the empress: the fragrance of the mysterious woman seems identical to the empress's. Finally, the empress herself explain the mystery: all that has happened, including Yu-wen Hui's revolt, has been foreordained in heaven. She herself was sent from heaven to China charged with the task of reestablishing peace after the revolt, but she needed help from a man well versed in the use of the bow and arrow. No such man was available in China, so the god Sumiyoshi was asked to provide a Japanese. She fell in love with Ben no Shōshō because they had been intimate in a previous life and because she now not only looked like a mortal woman

¹⁸ Hagitani, p. 62. ¹⁹ Hagitani, p. 71.

but shared the failings of a mortal. Her lapse would surely be punished when she returned to heaven.²⁰

Soon afterward Ben no Shōshō, about to sail for Japan, takes a tearful leave of the empress. Teika, having decided perhaps that he had written long enough in this vein, here resorted to a device familiar to him from his work as editor of old manuscripts: he provided a note, supposedly in the original manuscript, to the effect that at this point some pages had been lost because the string of the binding had broken.²¹ The homeward journey is briefly described. True to her word, Ben no Shōshō's mother is still waiting for him at Matsura. The Japanese emperor is overjoyed to have him back, and bestows on him a title equivalent to the one he received in China.

Ben no Shōshō goes as soon as possible to the Hatsuse Temple, fulfilling his promise to Princess Hua-yang. She reappears, and his love is once again awakened. He has not forgotten the empress, who lingers as a benevolent presence, but he has unfortunately lost all interest in Prince Kannabi, who is puzzled by his lack of ardor and especially by his eyes, red with weeping for another woman. He attempts to reassure her, but she suspects the worst.

At this point the novel ends. Teika appended an additional note, explaining that more pages had been lost, and two false postscripts: one dates the manuscript Jōkan 3 (A.D. 861) and quotes a poem by Po Chū-i 白居易, while the second (supposedly written by a later person) questions the authenticity of the poem. These pedantic touches are not without interest in themselves, but, more than anything else, they suggest that Teika was at a loss how to finish his story. Ben no Shōshō has three women in his life, and it is clear that each expects to be his only love. How will he console poor Kannabi? Will Hua-yang settle down in Japan? Is the empress waiting for him in heaven? These questions were fated never to be answered.

Teika's work in its unfinished state cannot be called a success, but he was able to write a *monogatari* that avoided influence from *Genji Monogatari*. It is not clear, however, why he was so determined to escape this influence. Perhaps an aggressively masculine temperament made him impatient with the refinements of Murasaki Shikibu. Perhaps also distaste for the prevailing ways of the aristocracy of his day made him nostalgic for the distant past when courtiers excelled not only with their writing brushes but with bows and arrows. *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari* stands outside the mainstream of Kamakura courtly fiction. It provides incontestable proof that not all *monogatari* written after *Genji* were deeply under its influence.

Ariake no Wakare

Ariake no Wakare 有明けの別 ('Parting at Dawn') seems a more typical example of courtly fiction of the Kamakura period, but perhaps it belongs to the late

²⁰ Hagitani, pp. 107-09. ²¹ Hagitani, p. 115.

Heian rather than the Kamakura period; we have virtually no information concerning either the time of composition or the author. It is discussed in *Mumyō Zōshi* as a ‘contemporary tale’ (*ima no yo no monogatari*), suggesting that it had been written not long before 1200. The same work praised its easy-to-read style, but disapproved of the supernatural events in the narration.²² The high regard for *Ariake no Wakare* in the eyes of the thirteenth-century critics is indicated by the inclusion in *Fūyōshū* of twenty of its poems, next in number to *Yoru no Nezame*. A modern critic has praised its ‘fresh, literary flavor’ that he contrasted with the ‘lifeless imitations’ found in other *monogatari* of the period.²³

The title of the work is derived from the celebrated waka by Mibu no Tadamine 壬生忠岑 found in *Kokinshū*, and also in the popular collection *Hyakunin Isshu* 百人一首 (‘A Hundred Poets, A Poem Each’):

<i>ariake no</i>	Ever since parting
<i>tsure naku mieshi</i>	When the daybreak moon appeared
<i>wakare yori</i>	Heartless in the sky,
<i>akatsuki bakari</i>	Nothing has been so gloomy
<i>uki mono wa nashi</i>	As the hour before the dawn.

This poem is quoted five times in the course of the work, but it is not clear to which parting it refers.²⁴ One commentator, on the basis of the quotation of the poem as the title, has suggested that the unknown author was someone close to Teika.²⁵ Mention in the text to ‘someone who climbed a mountain in the moonlight’²⁶ in order to obtain instruction in secret works of music may be a reference to Ben no Shōshō in *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari*, a further link with Teika. Connections also suggest themselves with *Torikaebaya Monogatari*; both works have for the central character a person who pretends to be of the opposite sex. But *Ariake no Wakare* also contains elements—the ones criticized in *Mumyō Zōshi*—that seem to belong to folk traditions rather than those of the court.

The story opens in a manner familiar since *Taketori Monogatari* 竹取物語: a husband and wife, long childless, pray to the gods (and consult doctors of yin-yang divination) in the hopes that a child will be born to them. Their prayers are answered, but a daughter, rather than a son, is born, and this is a disappointment because a daughter cannot continue the family line. The couple decides, in response to an oracle vouchsafed by the gods, to raise the daughter as a son.

As the story opens, the ‘son’ is sixteen or seventeen and has just been promoted to the position of Udaishō 右大將, or General of the Right. Like the

²² Kuwabara, pp. 98–99.

²³ Ishikawa Tōru 石川徹 in his preface to Ōtsuki Osamu 大槻脩, *Ariake no Wakare no Kenkyū* 在明けの別れの研究, Ōfūsha, 1969, p. 489.

²⁴ Ōtsuki, p. 491, suggests that he might refer to the parting of the emperor and the lady general.

²⁵ Ōtsuki, p. 499.

²⁶ Ōtsuki, pp. 112–13.

other heroes of court romances, he is extremely beautiful and plays various musical instruments superbly. His own fault (apart from his rather short stature) is his apparent lack of interest in women. His father, Sadaijin 左大臣, gives out that Udaishō has a younger sister who remains at home because she is too shy to appear before people. The emperor, although he has a consort and various concubines, has not had a child. He thinks that perhaps another wife is needed, and asks Sadaijin to send his daughter to court. Sadaijin refuses, alleging the girl's extreme shyness.

Thus far we have the making of a court romance along the lines of *Torikaebaya Monogatari*, and it does not require a literary detective to predict that sooner or later Udaishō will resume his rightful sex and become his own sister. But at this point we are confronted with an unfamiliar element: the young general is gifted with a power to make himself invisible and has a habit of visiting people without their knowing it.²⁷ His ability to pass into other people's bedrooms leads to the discovery that his uncle, Sadaishō 左大将, has conceived an improper love for his step-daughter. Udaishō also peeps in on several other bedrooms. In one there is a repulsive old prince who has been admitted by the father of the young lady whose favors he craves, in another the same prince's wife is lying with the profligate Sammi no Chūjō 三位中将. Udaishō also takes advantage of his invisibility to eavesdrop on a conversation of some women who are gossiping about him. They blame his failure to marry on excessive religious piety and wonder whether he is waiting for an angel to appear before he consents to marry.²⁸ One senses a ripe corruption in the sexual mores of these court dignitaries.

Sadaijin's wife is not aware that her husband is having an affair with her daughter, so it comes as a particular shock to learn that her daughter is pregnant. Deeply ashamed, the girl wants to die, and her parents are alarmed to think of the gossip that will surely spread concerning this unexampled case of a man having a child by his step-daughter. Udaishō, once again slipping unobserved into someone else's house, offers to lead the unhappy girl to a safe place. Having nowhere else to turn, she accepts, although she has no idea who he may be. Udaishō takes her home and explains the situation to his father, who agrees to allow the girl to become 'his' wife.

The wife, who has been given the name Tai no Ue 対の上, gives birth to a son. This means that Sadaijin now has a male heir who can succeed as head of the family. Udaishō wants to reveal his true sex, but his father fears that this will annul the benefit of at last having a successor. Udaishō is naturally unable to consummate the marriage, but explains to Tai no Ue that this is because he

²⁷ For a brief study of the ability of characters in Heian fiction to make themselves invisible or transform themselves, see Inaga Keiji 稲賀敬二, "Kakuremi" to "Henkei", *Josetsu* 「隠身」と「変形」, 序説, in Chūko

Bungaku Kenkyūkai 中古文学会, ed., *Heian Kōki: Monogatari to Rekishi Monogatari* 平安後期:物語と歴史物語, Kasama, 1982, pp. 1-16.

²⁸ Ōtsuki, p. 69.

does not propose to remain long in this world. For all his masculine ways, however, Udaishō must disappear for several days each month during his period. The promiscuous Sammi no Chūjō takes advantage of Udaishō's absence to seduce Tai no Ue. When Udaishō returns he notices that Tai no Ue is disturbingly distant. He suspects something has happened and, making himself invisible, reads the letter that Sammi no Chūjō sent Tai no Ue after their night together. She is pregnant once again, but Udaishō is ready to forgive her. His parents still refuse to allow him either to reveal his sex or take Buddhist orders.

Soon afterward the emperor has a strange dream in which he learns that the son born to Sadaijin after years of childlessness is really a daughter. He summons Udaishō, intending to ask about the meaning of the dream, and is struck for the first time by the young man's incomparable beauty. He takes Udaishō's hand, pulls him down beside him, and unties the ribbons of his robes. Udaishō weeps, but this only excites the emperor the more. Only then does he discover that Udaishō is a woman. After they have lain together, Udaishō puts on men's robes and is once again masculine in manner.

Udaishō begs his parents to let him become a woman, but they are reluctant to lose the privileges they have enjoyed thanks to the position of their 'son'. Udaishō can wait no longer. He informs his wife of his decision to leave the world, and soon afterward his death is reported. Everyone grieves. The emperor even considers abdicating, but he remembers Udaishō's younger sister and commands that she be brought to the palace. After a bare four or five months since the announcement of 'his' death, Udaishō's hair has grown so much that it is now the same length as his height.

Udaishō, renamed Himegimi 姫君 (the princess), must now lead a totally different life. She may no longer play the flute, an instrument reserved for men, but she is now at liberty to read fiction (*sōshi* 草子), formerly beneath her dignity. Her knowledge of Chinese is no longer of use, and the only distinguished poems in Chinese now being composed at the court are by the emperor himself. Himegimi is proclaimed an empress (*chūgū* 中宮), but she indicates in a waka that becoming empress means nothing to someone who has already known high office as a man. The narrator, in a rare aside, asks why she should have thought so little of the honor of becoming empress.²⁹

The second book of *Ariake no Wakare* is devoted mainly to Sadaijin, the supposed son of Udaishō and Tai no Ue. He is of an *irogonomi*, or sensual nature, seeking sexual gratification everywhere, even among women of the lower classes. The one woman before whom he feels any constraint is the now retired empress, who arouses his passionate attachment although he supposes she is his aunt. One of Sadaijin's adventures takes him to the house of the old prince whose lovemaking had been observed by Udaishō. The prince's wife has

²⁹ Ōtsuki, p. 202.

been jilted by her lover, leaving her with a daughter who is now about fifteen. Sadaijin is attracted initially to the girl, but he happens to see the mother, who looks young for her age, and she attracts him even more. He debates with himself whether to marry the girl or become the mother's lover, and decides in favor of the latter. He spends the night with the mother and has a parting at dawn that is not marked by the usual tender regrets but by the question he puts to himself: 'Why did I do it?' (*ika ni shitsuru koto zo.*)³⁰

The affair drags on. Sadaijin dutifully sends her morning-after letters, but she cannot help fearing that she will be deserted. She no longer worries about gossip, but he does, and always arranges to depart before dawn. Her husband, the prince, pays her a visit, but she detests him and pulls her clothes over her head, refusing to utter a word. At this point the author describes the faces of the prince and his wife, a rare instance in classical Japanese literature:

The prince's complexion, as one might expect of one of his birth, was extremely fair. His eyes, nose, mouth, and his cheekbones were massive in the old style, and he had a splendid beard. His long chin and imposing features were rather flushed, no doubt because he had been weeping with rage. One glance at his wife served to increase his rage, and he wept all the more bitterly. The woman, looking not in the least her great age,³¹ was very elegant, quite short but rather plump, and her hair hung most attractively over the forehead framing her eyebrows delightfully. Her mouth had charm, and her whole appearance was such that any man would have wanted to meet her.³²

The prince manages to keep Sadaijin's letters from reaching his wife, inducing an aversion to her husband so intense that she refuses food or drink, preferring death to life with him. Sadaijin, still hopelessly in love with the retired empress, visits her. He finds her looking at some pictures, and her ladies have scattered storybooks, or *sōshi*, around the room. The description gives a vivid though momentary glimpse of what it was like in the women's quarters of the palace. The empress chides Sadaijin for his failure to marry, suggesting the daughter of the Minister of the Right as a suitable wife, and warning him that he will acquire a bad reputation unless he marries. Sadaijin replies that he does not think he has long to live and that he would feel sorry for any woman who married him. He is unable to confess that the cause of his unhappiness is his hopeless love for the empress herself.

Sadaijin has another romance (which is developed later in the work) before he meets Ōigimi 大君, the daughter of the Minister of the Right. He is attracted to her beauty, but there is something cold and reserved about her that makes him think that she would be unlikely to comfort him when he was depressed. He nevertheless yields to pressure, especially from his grandfather (Udaishō's father), and the marriage is announced. Only then does he learn that his

³⁰ Ōtsuki, p. 256.

³¹ She was in her early forties.

³² Ōtsuki, p. 262-64.

mistress, the prince's wife, is the bride's aunt. She is enraged that Sadaijin has been so insensitive as to choose for his bride someone so closely related to her.

Soon afterward a *mono no ke* 物の怪, or evil spirit, attacks the retired empress and is subdued by a holy man from Mt Hiei with the greatest difficulty. Sadaijin takes another bride, this one the daughter of the Minister of the Center; the empress, who has long worried about his celibate state, is delighted that he should now have two such distinguished wives, but the prince's wife is distraught with rage. Sadaijin's first wife is attacked by the *mono no ke*. She is no longer haughty but gentle in the face of this affliction. She falls into a coma, and her face, altered by pain, now looks exactly like that of the prince's wife. The *mono no ke*, speaking through a child, declares that she will kill everyone loved by Sadaijin and, true to her word, she now afflicts Sadaijin's second wife as well as the first. They are saved only by the death of the prince's wife. Still further complications, mainly involving the secret of Sadaijin's birth, prolong the work before it breaks off, either not quite finished or with the original ending lost.

It is easy to trace influences from earlier literature, especially *Genji Monogatari*, on *Ariake no Wakare*. For example, the aloof daughter of the Minister of the Right, Sadaijin's first wife, inevitably recalls Aoi 葵, and the vengeful *mono no ke* who possesses his wife is similar to Lady Rokujō 六条. But the portrayal of the prince's wife is strikingly unlike that of the aristocratic Rokujō; she is promiscuous, a harridan, and (unlike Rokujō whose 'living ghost' unwittingly torments Aoi) she consciously resolves to wreak vengeance on anyone with whom Sadaijin has become intimate. It is possible to feel sorry for Rokujō, as anyone who has seen the noh play *Nonomiya* 野宮 knows, but the prince's wife is beyond redemption. The other resemblances to *Genji Monogatari* are similarly undercut by jarring elements that make the reader wonder whether the intent was perhaps parody rather than imitation. One senses everywhere in the work a corruption of the spirit that makes these nobles seem both familiar and contemptible, although occasionally, as in the domestic scene between the former Udaishō and her husband the emperor, when she pinches him in the course of a little tiff, the familiarity may be rather endearing. In any case, this is a far cry from the world of *Genji Monogatari*.

Udaishō's pretense that she is a man recalls not *Genji Monogatari* but *Torikaebaya Monogatari*. Here again, however, there is an important difference. Udaishō is neither temperamentally nor sexually inclined to be a man, but is brought up as one by her parents for their own motives. She excels in arts specifically associated with men, such as playing the flute or composing poems in Chinese, but this is the result of her education, not of her own tastes. And when it finally seems possible for her to resume her true sex, her parents object because this will cost them the special privileges they enjoy thanks to their high-ranking son. The motivation for changing sex in *Torikaebaya Monogatari*, at least in the present version, is ludicrously weak, as the reader

realizes from the ease with which the brother and sister adapt to their new roles, but it is plausible in *Ariake no Wakare*.³³

Another source for *Ariake no Wakare* seems to be the eleventh-century *monogatari* titled *Kakuremino* 隠れ蓑 ('The Invisible-Making Cape'). Udai-shō's ability to pass unperceived into people's houses probably owed much to the magic cape of the earlier work, but all that remains of *Kakuremino* is the severe judgment passed on the work by the ladies in *Mumyō Zōshi*³⁴ and the prefatory note to a poem in *Fūyōshū* stating that it was composed when the hero 'concealing his appearance went around to various places.'³⁵ The childishness of the invisible man/woman is at once a throwback to the past and a foretaste of the fantasy typical of medieval fiction.

Although it undoubtedly reflects a more decadent society than that portrayed in the fiction of the mid-Heian period, *Ariake no Wakare* is consistently of interest, and even promises at times to become an important work of literature. The promise is inadequately fulfilled, but the story stands out among the pseudo-classical tales as a most distinctive and memorable work.

Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi

The decadence apparent in such works as *Ariake no Wakare* is given even more explicit statement in *Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi* 我身にたどる姫君 ('The Princess in Search of Herself'), one of the major works of courtly fiction in the Kamakura period. The work, unusually long for its time, has about sixty characters, and the action takes place over a period of some forty-five years. It was unknown until 1933 when the first article describing its contents was published in a scholarly journal. The text was not printed until 1956 and even then, because of the unusual difficulty in making sense of the vaguely worded text, it was known only to a handful of scholars. Two annotated editions³⁶ appeared in the 1980s, and some enthusiasts now claim that it is the finest of all the pseudo-classical tales.³⁷

The cumbersome title originates in a waka composed by a lady,³⁸ the account of whose life was intended to unify the story. Soon after the work begins

³³ I am reminded of *Arabella*, the opera by Richard Strauss, in which the younger sister is obliged to dress and act like a man in order to improve her sister's chances of making an advantageous marriage.

³⁴ 'The materials of *Kakuremino* are so unusual, the book ought to be worth reading, but there are just too many things that one wishes were not there. The language is exceedingly old-fashioned, and the poems are so bad that it is quite put in the shade if compared to *Torikaebaya*. That is why so few people read it anymore.'

Kuwabara, p. 82. See also Marra, p. 410.

³⁵ Inaga Keiji, p. 410. 'San'itsu Monogatari' 散逸物語, in Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次, ed., *Nihon Bungaku Zenshi: Chūko* 日本文学全史: 中古, Gakutōsha, 1978, p. 383.

³⁶ Tokumitsu Sumio 徳満澄雄, *Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi Monogatari Zenchūshaku* 我身にたどる姫君物語全註釈, Yūseidō, 1980, and Imai Gen'e, *Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi*, Ōfūsha, 1983, 7 volumes.

³⁷ Imai, *Waga Mi*, 1, p. 151.

³⁸ I shall refer to her as the Otowa Princess, one of her titles, rather than 'the Princess in Search of Herself', the nickname commonly bestowed on her by commentators.

we are told of her determination to uncover the secret of her birth, epitomized in this waka:

<p><i>ika ni shite</i> <i>arishi yukue wo</i> <i>sazo to dani</i> <i>waga mi ni tadoru</i> <i>chigiri nariken</i></p>	<p>By what trick of fate Am I obliged to search for Even the faintest Clues into the vanished past To discover whom I am?³⁹</p>
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Clues to the date of composition are the usual ones: it is not mentioned in *Mumyō Zōshi*, evidence that it was probably written after 1200, but seven waka are quoted in *Fūyōshū*, proof that it existed prior to 1271. There is a special problem, however: all of the quoted waka occur in the first four of the eight books, suggesting that either the work had not yet been completed or else that the editors of *Fūyōshū* were unable to consult the complete text. In either case, it seems probable that the story was written about this time.⁴⁰ No strong candidate has emerged as the author of *Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi*, but it is generally agreed that it was probably a woman. Tokumitsu Sumio has listed five necessary qualifications of the author:

1. She was in a position to write a work of fiction between 1245 and 1271.
2. She was well versed in palace ceremonies and usages, and had personally experienced life at the court.
3. She was thoroughly acquainted with *Genji Monogatari* and *Sagoromo Monogatari* 狭衣物語.
4. She was an accomplished poet although an inexperienced writer of prose.
5. She must have longed for the realization of the ideal of monarchical rule based on the cooperation of the imperial family and the Fujiwara regents.⁴¹

After examining, in the light of these qualifications, the credentials of four outstanding women writers of the thirteenth century, Tokumitsu came to the conclusion that Ben no Naishi 弁内侍, a court lady known chiefly for her diary, was the most likely author, but he put forward her name without much confidence.⁴² In short, the author of the work is unknown.

Another problem in the composition is the total blank of seventeen years

³⁹ My interpretation of this difficult poem mainly follows Imai, *Waga Mi*, 1, p. 38. Tokumitsu, p. 19, does not explain the poem at all.

Imai, p. 40, quotes a section of the 'Niou' chapter of *Genji Monogatari* which, he says, is being imitated in the poem. This is the passage in which Kaoru, tormented by doubts concerning his identity, asks himself, '*Ika narikeru koto ni ka wa. Nan no chigiri nite, kō yasukaranu omoisoitaru mi ni shimo nariideteken.*' Ishida Jōji 石田穰二 & Shimizu Yoshiko 清水好子, ed., *Genji Monogatari*, Shinchō Nihon Koten Bungaku Shūsei, Shin-

chōsha, 1982, 6, p. 167.

Edward Seidensticker renders this as: 'He could only brood in solitude and ask what missteps in a former life could explain the painful doubts with which he had grown up.'

The Tale of Genji, Knopf, New York, 1976, 2, p. 737.

⁴⁰ Imai, *Waga Mi*, 1, p. 175, dates the work between 1268 and 1271. Tokumitsu, pp. 6-7, provides various explanations of why the quoted poems are only from the first four books.

⁴¹ Tokumitsu, p. 10.

⁴² Tokumitsu, pp. 10-12.

between Books 3 and 4, suggesting that part of the text may be missing. Furthermore, Book 6 is chronologically unrelated to the surrounding chapters, recalling the ‘parallel’ (*narabi*) chapters of *Genji Monogatari*, and inducing some scholars to consider that it must have been written later. But it is now generally believed that one person wrote the entire work, in its present order, and that no large sections of the text have been lost.

Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi as a whole is difficult to summarize. Although one expects that the Otowa 音羽 princess and her search for her identity will be the main theme, she is not a central figure, and we learn her secret in the course of the very first book: she is the child born of the illicit union between the chancellor and the empress; and at the end of the first book, after the death of the empress, the chancellor invites the princess to live at one of his houses. This would seem to solve all the problems posed by the uncertainty of the princess about her birth, but many new complications occur, notably the various liaisons formed between courtiers.

Book 4 is undoubtedly the most interesting section of the work. Laborious efforts have been made to tracing the influence of *Genji Monogatari* on other parts of the story, but Book 4 stands apart from any other surviving examples of courtly fiction. It relates the story of the former *saigū* 斎宮, or High Priestess of Ise. As Book 4 opens there is a change of reign in the capital. This automatically also involved a change of High Priestess, and the princess who had been serving in that capacity returned to the capital. She discovers that she has nowhere to live: her mother is dead and her house is occupied by the mother’s younger sister, Dainagon no Kimi 大納言君, who has become a nun. The priestess’s father, Cloistered Emperor Saga, now living outside the city in a remote place, does not like the idea of sharing his house with someone he hardly knows. He asks Dainagon no Kimi to take her in, and she does so with evident reluctance, fearing that the wayward behavior of the former High Priestess (of which she has had a glimpse) will reflect on her own reputation. Her house is in a poor state of repair and is remote from the city.

We learn that the country is now ruled by an empress, the half-sister of the former High Priestess. No empress had ruled in her own right since the end of the Nara period, more than four hundred years earlier. Was this an archaic touch, similar to those in *Matsura-no-miya Monogatari*, and intended to indicate that this was not a tale about the Heian period? Or was the author, a woman, merely engaging in a bit of fantasy about a time when women wielded the highest power? In any case, the empress is portrayed as an ideal ruler—learned in the classics of both Japan and China,⁴³ artistic, compassionate, and always fair in her governing of the nation.

Udaishō, a high-ranking official whose love for the unmarried empress was rebuffed, thinks that he will divert himself with the former High Priestess,

⁴³ Imai, *Waga Mi*, 5, p. 105.

reasoning that she probably resembles her half-sister. One rainy night, he goes to her house and peeps in through the delapidated screens. He views four or five young women, their faces flushed with the excitement of the game they are playing, but no one looking like the mistress of the household is to be seen. Finally Udaishō makes out two women in the adjoining room. Although it is summer, the women have pulled their robes over their heads, and they are lying there, embraced so tightly that he wonders that they can breathe. He hears their groans and supposes something extremely sad afflicts them, only for them to burst into seemingly uncontrollable laughter. Udaishō is baffled: the women are clearly doing something, but he cannot tell what it is. This should have at least aroused his curiosity but, not wishing to become involved in other people's affairs, he leaves without pursuing the matter.⁴⁴

The story goes back to the time when the former High Priestess was still at Ise. She doted on a certain lady named Chūjō 中将, and the two women were inseparable, day and night, laughing and crying together. After the former High Priestess returned to the capital, another young woman, Kozaishō 小宰相, was attracted to her service, and soon she received the passionate attentions of the former High Priestess. Chūjō, discovering them at their play, slammed shut the *shōji* and was so disgruntled that she remained in her room all day and did not attend the High Priestess at night. In a place where no one could observe her, she began to perform rites of black magic.⁴⁵ Chūjō also took to startling people by shrieking and throwing herself on the ground, crying that she was afraid of a *mono no ke*. Recognizing that jealousy was the cause of her outburst, Kozaishō tried to calm her by saying that even though the High Priestess was kind, she did not intend to serve her any longer. She declared, 'I am I!' (*Ware wa ware*),⁴⁶ meaning, it would seem, that she is going to look out for her own interests, a most individualistic utterance for a character in a work of courtly fiction.

Despite this reassurance, the *mono no ke* invariably continues to make appearances whenever Kozaishō goes to the High Priestess's room. One day her brother, Hyōe no Suke 兵衛佐, calls. He peeps under the curtained enclosure and sees two women locked in an embrace. He gives up his attempts to help her, henceforth sending only letters. Evidently Kozaishō found it more difficult than she had anticipated to break off relations with the former High Priestess.

In his eagerness to escape from the place, Hyōe no Suke accidentally lets fall his fan. When the fan is discovered, the former High Priestess demands to know how a man got into her house. She wonders about the owner, insisting that she is afraid, but at the same time she rather hopes that the man will come back. She orders the gate to be bolted, but her waiting woman, observing how she had perfumed herself and burned incense in her rooms, sees to it that the

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 11-13. ⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 20. ⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 44.

gate is not bolted, divining her mistress's real intent.⁴⁷ Dainagon no Kimi, the aunt of the former High Priestess, by this time has had quite enough, and moves out of the house. She says that she will be away for only for twenty days, but she takes all her possessions when she leaves.

Another lady in the former High Priestess's entourage, Shindayū 新大夫, is envious of the attentions that other women receive, and attempts to ingratiate herself. As she is praying for divine assistance, the former High Priestess suddenly arouses herself from sleep and sends a maid to Chūjō's room to ascertain what she is wearing. The maid reports that Chūjō is dressed in pale blue, at which her mistress cries out, 'How horrible! It's just what I thought she would be wearing!' She has dreamed that a woman in blue was tormenting her.⁴⁸

The former High Priestess asks Kozaishō to summon a holy man, although she does not expect to live until he arrives. The holy man is not at home, and Kozaishō is at her wit's end. Finding the opportunity she has been waiting for, Shindayū offers to fetch a medium and soon returns with one who declares that a woman in blue has driven seven nails into a doll; the nails must be removed or else the former High Priestess is doomed.⁴⁹ The former High Priestess gives orders to find the doll and remove the nails. This is done and she recovers. Shindayū is rewarded for having discovered the cause of her mistress's pain by being chosen as her constant companion.

The book concludes with the former High Priestess living in comfort and enjoying great prestige, by favor of her half-sister, the empress. Her residence is now so impressive that nobody rides past it without dismounting, and pedestrians remove and carry their footwear as they go by. Guards throw stones at people who do not show proper respect. Even after the incident with the doll, Chūjō is still allowed to wait on the High Priestess. Sometimes, in a playful mood, she acts like a *mono no ke*, but she suddenly falls ill and dies in great pain.⁵⁰

In an aside the author tells us why she wrote about these women: it was to show how not only their own natures but also the forces of circumstances determined their fates. If Chūjō had not revealed her jealousy by slamming the *shōji*, she might have been able to go on living happily with the High Priestess. All the other characters live to a ripe old age.⁵¹

There could hardly be a more unexpected conclusion to the account of the doings in the former High Priestess's house; it strains the imagination to think of the people involved living happily ever after. One thing is certain: their story owes very little to the tale of the Shining Genji. The only time Genji's name appears is by way of contrast with an indescribably stupid, conceited, dwarf-

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 80.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 82.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 133.

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 127-28.

ish man who was formerly Chūjō's lover. The narrator remarks, 'I pity poor Genji being made the subject of such a comparison!'⁵²

Everything in this section of *Waga Mi ni Tadoru Himegimi* is so described that we are likely to find the events not only decadent but ugly. Much as the empress is praised, we might admire her more if she chastised rather than rewarded her wayward half-sister. The whole of the work is not in this vein, it is true, but the story of the former High Priestess of Ise reveals how far the *monogatari* had wandered from the path of *Genji Monogatari*.

Iwade Shinobu Monogatari

Iwade Shinobu Monogatari いはでしのぶ物語 ('A Tale of Silent Yearning') is one of the most impressive works of Kamakura-period courtly fiction. Unfortunately only the first two of the eight books have survived intact, and we know the rest of the story from extracts from the texts included in a later book by way of providing background for the quoted 382 poems. The work seems to have enjoyed a considerable reputation in its day, as we can judge from the inclusion of 34 of its poems in *Fūyōshū*, the fifth largest total from any *monogatari*, more than either *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari* or *Yoru no Nezame*.⁵³ The date of the composition has not been determined, but various clues suggest that *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* was written between 1235 and 1251.⁵⁴ Virtually nothing is known about the author, but for various reasons it has been tentatively suggested that the work was written by a woman, possibly the granddaughter of Shunzei.⁵⁵ The title seems to refer to the secret love of Nii no Chūjō 二位中将 for the empress.

As usual, resemblances to *Genji Monogatari* have been discovered. First of all, there is obviously close similarity between the elderly prince in *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* who has taken Buddhist orders and lives in Fushimi with his two daughters and Prince Hachi 八 and his two daughters in *Genji Monogatari*; further, Naidaijin's visits to the princesses at Fushimi recall those of Kaoru 薫 to Uji. We can only assume that this was deliberate; the author of *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* recreated a familiar situation only to give it an entirely new meaning. The prince in Fushimi, sensing that he has not much longer to live, begs Naidaijin to take the older daughter as one of his wives, and Naidaijin, who has been living quite happily with the First Princess, reluc-

⁵² Ibid, p. 127.

⁵³ The four *monogatari* with the greatest number of poems included in *Fūyōshū* are, in descending order, *Genji Monogatari*, *Utsubo Monogatari*, *Sagoromo Monogatari* 狭衣物語, and *Kaze ni Tsurenaki Monogatari* 風につれなき物語. Only the opening chapters of the last-named work survive.

Ogi, pp. 292–312.

⁵⁴ These are the dates of the submission to

the emperor of the text of the anthology *Shin Chokusen Shū* 新勅撰集, 1235, and the completion of *Shoku Gosen Shū* 続後撰集. Poems from these collections are quoted in *Iwade Shinobu*.

Ogi Takashi, *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari: Hombun to Kenkyū* いはでしのぶ物語: 本文と研究, Kasama, 1977, p. 39.

⁵⁵ Ogi, *Iwade*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ Ogi, *Kamakura*, pp. 203–04.

tantly complies, seemingly out of pity for the old man. The girl, Ōigimi, is beautiful, and Naidaijin, who at first could not muster much interest in her, on occasion toys with the thought of bringing her to his palace, but in the end she is captured from him by the emperor himself. The surface resemblances between the Fushimi princesses and the Uji princesses become ironic; unlike Ōigimi in *Genji Monogatari* who rebuffs all attempts to win her, this Ōigimi is passed from man to man. The other similarities between the two works are confined mainly to the surface, as if the author of *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* borrowed material from Murasaki Shikibu mainly as themes on which to create her new variations.

Ogi Takashi, one of the few scholars who have devoted much attention to *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari*, has written:

It has often been said that *monogatari* of this kind written in the Heian and Kamakura periods did not venture one step beyond imitation of *Genji Monogatari*, and the present *monogatari* is no exception. However, in the precision of the descriptions and the elegant flow of the language, the exactness of the correspondence between what has gone before and what happens afterward, and in the smooth development of the plot, it is one of the outstanding examples of the novel. I wonder whether it may possibly rank at the head of the *monogatari* composed from the late Heian period into the Kamakura period.⁵⁶

Iwade Shinobu Monogatari is a memorable example of courtly fiction. One is tempted to call it a novel if only because the author's control of the materials goes beyond what is expected of the storyteller. The supernatural is not a conspicuous element in the narration⁵⁷ and the most important incident, the false rumor that Naidaijin is neglecting his wife in favor of another woman, requires no suspension of belief. The characters are all unmistakable human beings, and there is little doubt that this work would rank among the major achievements of Japanese traditional fiction if the entire text had survived.

The story opens with a description of the beauty of the garden at Ichijō-in, Naidaijin's palace.⁵⁸ His wife, the First Princess (Ippon-no-miya 一品宮), looks out on the garden without much pleasure, remembering the past when she lived in the Imperial Palace and could admire the cherry blossoms there. At that moment a messenger arrives from the palace. It is Nii no Chūjō, a boy of fourteen or fifteen whose unspoken love for the princess runs through the work. He catches a glimpse of her face, normally hidden behind curtains, and feels great

⁵⁷ It is true that Ippon-no-miya seems to die in childbirth, the victim of a *mono no ke*, only to be revived by the prayers of a holy man (Ogi, *Iwade*, p. 355). But the reader is likely to obtain the impression that the resuscitation was due to natural rather than supernatural means. In any case, the *mono no ke* was a familiar visitor, mentioned in almost every

monogatari of the period.

⁵⁸ I call him by this name throughout, although this in fact is a title by which he is known only in part of the book. Elsewhere his name changes as he rises in the hierarchy. At this point in the narration he is actually called Taishō 大將.

perturbation, but he controls his feelings long enough to say that the flowers are a gift from the crown prince. A letter from the prince is attached to the spray of cherry blossoms. Even as the princess examines the letter, her husband, Naidaijin, enters. He cuts a splendid figure, a worthy match for the princess in his appearance. He asks about the letter, an invitation to the palace from the crown prince to see the cherry blossoms. Although the princess would like nothing better than go to the palace, she shrugs off the letter with the words: 'What a bore!'

The characters of the principal figures in the novel have been presented in a few paragraphs: the princess has never forgotten her life in the palace and regrets her marriage to a commoner, no matter how splendid; her husband, Naidaijin, loves her and fears no rival; and the youthful Chūjō, unable to voice his love for the princess, is filled with envy of Naidaijin.

The story then reverts to a description of Naidaijin's antecedents. His father, the former emperor, had many children, but some died young, others took Buddhist vows, and there was no one to succeed him to the throne. He abdicated in favor of his brother, at the same time taking as his concubine a lady-in-waiting whom he loved. Not long before their union was blessed by a child, he fell mortally ill. Realizing that he would not live long enough to see the child, he asked the chancellor to marry the lady-in-waiting and to raise the child as his own. The chancellor naturally agreed, and soon afterward the former emperor died.⁵⁹

The lady-in-waiting was extremely grieved, but (as the text informs us) one does not die of grief.⁶⁰ She vowed to become a nun as soon as her child was born, but this wish was also frustrated, and in the end she became, as the former emperor had wished, the wife of the chancellor, who treated her with every kindness. The child she bore was the future Naidaijin. Although his real father was an emperor, he was the acknowledged son of the chancellor and as such was a commoner.

The First Princess, the daughter of the reigning emperor, was incomparably beautiful and gifted. She was raised by her doting parents with the utmost care, but somehow (not explained in the text) Naidaijin found a crack in the defenses surrounding her bedroom. After one meeting, both the princess and Naidaijin fell into a wasting ailment stemming from their love. Eventually the cause was discovered, and the emperor reluctantly agreed to their marriage. After the wedding, the princess moved from the palace to Naidaijin's house, Ichijō-in.

The narration now shifts to the subject of Chūjō, whom we have seen as the

⁵⁹ Ogi, *Iwade*, p. 143.

⁶⁰ This surprisingly cool-headed statement is derived from a poem in *Gyokuyō Waka Shū* 玉葉和歌集, #1827, by Shunzei (but earlier found in his private collection):

*haru shiranu / Koshiji no yuki mo / ware
bakari / uki ni kiesenu / mono wa omowaji.*
'Even the snows of Koshiji / That know not
the spring / Are surely ignorant / Of griefs
like mine / That never melt.'

youthful bearer of a spray of cherry blossoms from the palace. His mother was born to the present emperor while he was still crown prince, at the time only fourteen years old, and the child's mother was sixteen. The daughter born of this union also married very young after being 'stolen' by the youngest son of the chancellor. The emperor was most annoyed, but finally permitted the marriage, only for both parents of Chūjō to die within a short time. The orphaned boy grew up in the palace where he distinguished himself by his remarkable ability at playing stringed and wind instruments and by his skill at composing poetry in Chinese, the standard accomplishments for a courtier. His coming-of-age ceremony (*gembuku* 元服) was held in the presence of the emperor.

These pedigrees, although not without interest in themselves, are necessary above all as underpinning for the developments that ensue, and represent a departure from the casual introductions of the persons more usual in a *monogatari*. One is tempted to interpret them as explanations of the temperaments inherited by Naidaijin and Chūjō from their different parents; in any case, we understand their characters better because of what we know about their antecedents, and the failures of their marriages echo their parents' failure. We are clearly meant to be interested in these characters as individuals and not merely as figures in a romance.

Both Naidaijin and Chūjō love the same woman, the peerless First Princess. She is the wife of Naidaijin, and there is no possibility that Chūjō's secret love will ever be fulfilled. In his dejection he prays the gods to free him from his hopeless attachment. Naidaijin has had numerous love affairs before his marriage to the First Princess, but he is now completely changed and desires nothing more than to spend every night with his wife.

Chūjō is consoled by another woman, characterized by one scholar as a 'flapper'!⁶¹ This woman, although the daughter of the late Prince Sochi 帥, has none of the demure reticence associated with women of her class, and has in fact had relations with Naidaijin, the emperor, and various other dignitaries. One night when Chūjō is visiting this lady, Naidaijin passes her house and recalls that, before his marriage, he had often stopped there. He notices through a break in the crumbling wall around the old house a man's carriage and, out of curiosity, he goes in, wondering who the visitor might be. He overhears voices, and recognizes Chūjō's. Thinking it would be amusing to catch Chūjō in this compromising situation, Naidaijin lingers. The woman does not wish to let Chūjō leave, but finally he makes his escape, only for Naidaijin to grasp his arm as if he were a criminal. Chūjō explains that he stopped at the house to see the tinted autumn leaves.

Naidaijin teases him, 'The two of you were so closely pressed together that there was no chance any autumn leaves would come between you.'⁶² Chūjō

⁶¹ Ogi, *Iwade*, p. 50.

⁶² Ogi, *Iwade*. p. 218. There is a pun on *hima*, meaning the space between two people but also leisure. The poem means that there

was no *hima* between the robes of Chūjō and the woman, and there was also no *hima* for him to admire the red leaves.

is provoked into taunting Naidaijin for his philandering, to which Naidaijin truthfully replies that since his marriage he has not been interested in any woman except his wife. What began as a prank on Naidaijin's part develops into an unpleasant quarrel.

Naidaijin loves his wife, but he does not really understand her. He is not aware, for example, how much she misses her former life. She muses to herself that if only she had married as her father had intended she need never have left the palace. Not being able to see the emperor whenever she chooses makes her feel as if she now inhabits a totally different realm.⁶³ Chūjō's infatuation with the First Princess is such that he cannot seriously consider marrying anyone else, although every person of consequence would like nothing better than to have him as a son-in-law. He maintains so gloomy a mien that, in the hopes of cheering him, the retired emperor offers him the use of a charming small house where he can entertain lady friends in privacy, but Chūjō rarely stays there. Indeed, he outwardly seems to have lost interest in women.

The birth of a baby boy to the First Princess crowns Naidaijin's happiness. But one day he catches her as she is writing a letter, which she hides as soon as she sees him. It is not a letter to a lover as at first he fears, but to her father, in response to one he sent her describing his loneliness in the palace without her. Her reply relates her unhappiness in two poems, of which the second is: 'At first I grieved and lamented, supposing it must be an unhappy dream, but I doubt I would be so unhappy even if I had died within that dream.'⁶⁴

Naidaijin is stunned by this revelation. At first he blames himself for not having noticed anything amiss, then he expresses anger at the emperor's words, citing to the First Princess instances of happy marriages between members of the imperial family and commoners. He wonders whether she ever loved him, and supposes she finds it painful even to think that their relations as man and wife will last through two lifetimes. He is all but carried away by his arguments, only to break down into tears as he looks at the incredibly lovely woman who is his wife. She first murmurs that she never intended him to see the letter, but finally becomes so exasperated with his rhetoric that she says with venom in her voice, 'How happy I would be if you would kindly shut up!'⁶⁵ He offers to stop the argument if she will promise never to write such things again, and the scene ends with him saying, 'I'm sure you must be sleepy,' and inviting her to bed.

Their argument has a curiously modern flavor, and the resolution is what one would expect, but the fact remains that the First Princess is not happy in her husband's house. When the occasion comes for her to return to the palace she does not hesitate. The opportunity is provided by a rumor that reaches the ears of the retired emperor that Naidaijin has fallen in love with another woman whom he treats with greater care than his wife. The woman in question

⁶³ Ogi, *Iwade*, p. 244.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

is the older of two sisters whose mother has died and who live with their father, a lay priest, in Fushimi, as described above. In the course of a visit to the father, Naidaijin peeps in on the sisters, who are not shielded from men's gaze by curtains in the usual way. The younger sister, a girl of thirteen or fourteen, looks as if she would one day make a fine wife for someone, but the older sister is enchanting. She even looks like the First Princess.

Naidaijin's second visit to Fushimi is undoubtedly inspired by attraction for Ōigimi, the older sister, although it did not occur to him that anything serious might come of the visit. However, no sooner does he arrive than the girls' father asks bluntly, 'If it's all the same to you, how about tonight? I gather it's marked a lucky day in the calendar.'⁶⁶ Naidaijin is persuaded. That night when he gets back home, contrary to his normal practice he does not hurry to the room of the First Princess. On the following day, however, he decides to tell her what happened the previous night, reasoning that if he does not inform her someone else will. He hides nothing, but insists that he has made a clean break with his past and that what happened at Fushimi was only a momentary aberration.

As if to prove his contention, Naidaijin does not go back to Fushimi, much to the distress of Ōigimi and her father. She wonders how she got involved in this 'marriage'. The First Princess is not bitter over what has happened. Indeed, she shows no reaction whatsoever. Her only conscious wish is to be back in the palace. A heavy snowfall just the night that Naidaijin is making one of his infrequent visits to Fushimi makes the princess long for the shelter provided by her parents, and the following morning, looking out on the garden she recalls how people used to build a snow mountain in the palace garden for her diversion. When Naidaijin returns he explains his visit to Fushimi in terms of worry over the health of the old prince-priest, who dies soon afterward, leaving the two sisters and their aunt (a younger sister of the late prince) as responsibilities of Naidaijin.

At this time the First Princess is expecting another baby. In the midst of the delivery, which is delayed and difficult, a *mono no ke* makes its presence felt. The First Princess, afflicted by the evil spirit, loses consciousness and finally stops breathing, but is revived by the prayers of a holy man. The *mono no ke* identifies herself as the deceased mother of Ōigimi, come to wreak vengeance for the unkind treatment her daughter has received. She is eventually driven away and a baby girl is safely born.

Soon afterward rumors reach the ears of the retired emperor to the effect that Naidaijin has not only been unfaithful to the First Princess but has grossly neglected her. His first thought is to take his daughter back. He decides that her son should stay with his father but that she should bring the daughter with her to his palace. The First Princess accepts this command with no show of

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 295.

hesitation or resistance. She has not detected any change in Naidaijin's behavior, but she feels that she cannot disobey her father; even if he commanded her to go and live among savages on the frontier, she would have no choice but to obey. Naidaijin returns just as she is about to leave for the palace. He accepts her statement that she is going for only a short time and asks when he should call for her. He naturally has no idea why the retired emperor has sent for his daughter, but when she fails to answer his letters he realizes that something must have happened. He reasons that someone must have lied about his actions, for he can find no fault in himself that would have occasioned this step. When he goes to the palace to see his wife, he is refused admission, but in a touching scene his infant daughter is brought to him and she smiles when he takes her in his arms.

This is more or less where the text of the two surviving books of *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* ends, although summaries of the remaining books exist. Even in its unfinished state, it is a particularly affecting tale with many moments that strike a contemporary reader by the realism of the details. Of particular interest is the account of the terrible effects of a false rumor. Courtly fiction abounds in mentions of the obsessive dread of what people may think, even on the part of characters whose social position should make them indifferent to common gossip. But here the retired emperor not only believes the rumor but takes back his daughter and prevents her husband from seeing her. The compliance of the First Princess, even though it destroys her marriage, suggests that her love for Naidaijin was never strong enough to cause her to forget the privileged life she once led. Naidaijin is helpless to combat the rumor and will eventually take up with some other woman.

Iwade Shinobu Monogatari does not resemble *Genji Monogatari* in the impression it creates on readers, despite the similarity of a few situations. Unlike certain *monogatari* of the Kamakura period that startle by the unconventionality of the actions of the characters, *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* describes people of the court society who suffer not because of the machinations of evil adversaries but because the author believed that suffering is the normal condition of sensitive human beings. In this respect, if no other, she was indebted to Murasaki Shikibu.

Sumiyoshi Monogatari

The last work of Kamakura courtly fiction to be discussed here in detail presents special problems of dating. There are more than a hundred variant texts of the present version of *Sumiyoshi Monogatari* 住吉物語 ('The Tale of Sumiyoshi'),⁶⁷ and strong evidence indicates that the *monogatari* of the same title mentioned in *Genji Monogatari* was still a different work, probably dating

⁶⁷ For a translation, see Harold Parlett, tr., | (1901), pp. 37-123.
'The Sumiyoshi Monogatari', in *TASJ*, 29:1 |

back to the end of the tenth century. The present *Sumiyoshi Monogatari* undoubtedly has links with the earlier work of that name, but it is even more closely associated with the many later stories on the theme of a young girl's suffering at the hands of her wicked stepmother. This theme was treated in the early *monogatari* titled *Ochikubo Monogatari* 落窪物語, and presumably there are connections, although very remote, to the body of similar stories in other countries, notably *Cinderella*. It is not impossible that the story made its way to Japan across the expanse of Asia, but the tale is almost universal, and some scholars have suggested that originally it was a nature myth, Cinderella being the dawn oppressed by the night clouds (the cruel stepmother) who is finally rescued by the sun (the prince who marries her).⁶⁸

The present version of *Sumiyoshi Monogatari* probably dates from the second or third decade of the thirteenth century.⁶⁹ Perhaps, as has been claimed, there was not much basic difference between the earlier and later versions of the tale,⁷⁰ but details had to be modified in response to the changes in marriage customs among the nobility. As long as a man (in the Heian manner) maintained wives in separate establishments there was not much likelihood of stepmothers inflicting hardships on the man's children by another wife, but when monogamy became usual the possibility became much stronger. The largest number of stepchild stories dates from the Muromachi period.⁷¹

Sumiyoshi Monogatari is unusual in that the two daughters of the wicked stepmother are on good terms with Himegimi, the stepchild. Another special feature of this version of the Cinderella story is the stepmother's attempt to discredit the girl in the eyes of her father (and of the world) by introducing a man—a dissolute priest—into her room and insisting that the girl has a lover.⁷²

Sumiyoshi Monogatari is given what literary interest it possesses by the account of the efforts of Chūjō, the officer who has fallen in love with Himegimi, to marry her. His first attempt is frustrated by the stepmother, who tricks him into marrying one of her own daughters. The stepmother decides to have Himegimi marry an elderly gentleman, but the girl escapes, taking refuge in Sumiyoshi, where she hides and plans to become a nun. Chūjō prays at Hase-

⁶⁸ For another theory concerning the introduction of the Cinderella theme into Japan, see Chieko Irie Mulhern, 'Cinderella and the Jesuits: An *Otogi-zōshi* Cycle as Christian Literature', in MN 34:4 (1979), pp. 409-47.

⁶⁹ Takeyama Takaaki 武山隆昭 in *Sumiyoshi Monogatari*, p. 101, gives several theories for dating, including one that dates the revised version of the tale between 1219 and 1221, and another between 1202 and 1251.

⁷⁰ In 1978 Inaga Keiji suggested that revisions to the original version of *Sumiyoshi Monogatari* were made as early as 985-987,

but even if some revisions go back to that time, others surely were made much later.

For a brief discussion of the question, see Yoshiyama Hiroki 吉山裕樹, '*Monogatari no Kaisaku*' 物語の改作, in Ii Haruki 伊井春樹, ed., *Monogatari Bungaku no Keifu* 物語文学の系譜, Sekai Shisōsha, Kyoto, 1986, pp. 164-66.

⁷¹ See Ikeda Yasaburō 池田弥三郎, *Bungaku to Minzokugaku* 文学と民俗学, Iwasaki Bijutsusha, 1966, pp. 42-189, for a comprehensive account of the theme of the mistreated stepchild in Japanese literature.

⁷² Takeyama, pp. 40-41.

dera for a divine revelation concerning her whereabouts and learns that she is at Sumiyoshi. He tracks her down with great effort, and at last finds and weds her. Before long he is promoted to chancellor, and he and his wife flourish. The stepmother dies in disgrace, mourned by no one.

Perhaps the most effective passage in the work is the description of Chūjō's journey to Sumiyoshi in search of Himegimi. He goes on foot, dressed in white like a pilgrim, accompanied by only a single retainer. That night Himegimi sees him in a dream, struggling over the mountains, sleeping in the fields. She tells Jijū 侍従, her confidante, about the dream, which Jijū at once recognizes as a 'true dream', and we learn:

Chūjō was not accustomed to such exertions, and blood oozed from his beautiful, white feet. He looked so unlikely ever to reach his destination that every passerby stared at him. Toward dusk he reached a place where there were breaks in the pines on the shore and he could see waves rising in the distant sea. Here and there were reed-thatched cottages, and boats trolling along the coast cutting seaweed, and to his surprise he saw smoke rising from salt-kilns. Even when he had come up quite close he still did not know where he was.

Dejected, he threw himself under a pine and was resting there when he noticed a boy of about ten gathering dried pine branches. He called to the boy, 'Where do you live? And what is this place called?'

The boy answered, 'This is Sumiyoshi. I live very near here.'

'I am delighted to hear it,' said Chūjō. 'Are there people of consequence living around here?'

The boy answered, 'There's the chief priest of the shrine.'

Chūjō asked, 'Is there anywhere around here where people from the capital are living?'

'Some nuns from the capital live at a place called Suminoe.'

Chūjō asked detailed questions about Suminoe, but when he got there, he found only a lonely-looking hut built near an inlet of the sea. The moon shone faintly through the trees. He could not see anyone likely to respond to his questions, and the whole place looked exceedingly forlorn. The sun had already gone down, and he stood dejectedly under a pine that he addressed in tears, 'If only you were a human being, there are things I would ask you.'⁷³

The passage is memorable because of such effective touches as Chūjō's bleeding feet or the boy's thinking first of the priest of the local shrine when asked whether any people of consequence were living nearby. The descriptions of the coast along the Inland Sea, although not romanticized, are appealing; a little later in the story Chūjō admires the scenery because it is so unlike the landscapes near the capital. But for readers of the time the most noteworthy element in this passage was probably the boy, who, as commentators inform us, was not simply a local child but a messenger sent by Kannon of Hase-dera to guide Chūjō. Versions of the tale composed in the Muromachi period were

⁷³ Takeyama, pp. 70-72.

likely to contain religious elements absent from the original stepmother stories and only first adumbrated at this time. *Sumiyoshi Monogatari* in its present version suggests how the tradition of courtly fiction would imperceptibly give way to the popular fiction of a later age.

Conclusion

It is difficult to generalize about possible trends in the fiction of the Kamakura period if only because the dating of the texts is so uncertain. We cannot even be sure that the best works have survived from the period. Indeed, the mutilated *Iwade Shinobu Monogatari* is unquestionably superior to the Heian romance *Torikaebaya Monogatari*, which survives more or less intact; and more poems from *Kaze no Tsurenaki Monogatari* 風のつれなき物語, which survives only in fragments, were included in *Fūyōshū* than from *Yoru no Nezame* or *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari*.⁷⁴ Again, we also have only vague indications about the readership of the surviving texts, and this means that the apparent changes—such as an increase of religious elements—may have represented either a response to the changed taste of the same audience or else the author's hope of appealing to a new readership by including religious themes.

Whatever our conclusions may be about the value of the works produced during the last stage of the development of courtly fiction, it is difficult to concur in the judgment that they were little more than imitations of *Genji Monogatari* or that they betrayed a want of creative imagination.⁷⁵ None of the later works of courtly fiction compares with *Genji Monogatari*, but this may be rather like saying that no later British writer of tragedies can compare with Shakespeare. The Kamakura examples of courtly fiction are worth reading because their memorable parts so little resemble *Genji Monogatari*. Their attraction is intermittent, and we must sometimes put up with tedious passages of conventional description, but at their best these works bring us as close to the people they describe as even the masterpieces of Heian fiction.

⁷⁴ For a good account of what is known about *Kaze ni Tsurenaki Monogatari*, see Ogi, *Kamakura*, pp. 292–312.

⁷⁵ Ichiko Teiji, *Chūsei Shōsetsu to sono*

Shūhen 中世小説とその周辺, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981, pp. 12ff, develops this theme.