

The Kagerō Diary

A Woman's Autobiographical Text
from Tenth-Century Japan

Translated with an Introduction and Notes
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Introduction

Reclaiming an Ancestress

"For we think back through our mothers if we are women."
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*¹

It is just that in the course of living, lying down, getting up, dawn to dusk, when she looks at the odds and ends of the old tales, of which there are so many, they are just so much fantasy, that she thinks perhaps if she were to make a record of a life like her own, being really nobody, it might actually be novel, and could even serve to answer, should anyone ask, what is it like, the life of a woman married to a highly placed man, yet the events of the months and years gone by are vague, places where I have just left it at that are indeed many.

With these few lines of remarkable self-awareness, the author of this diary, a woman of a thousand years ago known to us only as Michitsuna's Mother (936-95?), declares her purpose in writing about her life. Her text is part of a corpus of distinguished literary texts by women in the Heian period (794-1185). The texts of this corpus, including *The Tale of Genji*, *Izumi Shikibu Diary*, *Murasaki Shikibu Diary*, *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*, and *Sarashina Diary*,² established the foundation for classical Japa-

1. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Grafton Books, 1977), 72-73.
2. Edward Seidensticker, trans., *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Knopf, 1976), or the translation by Arthur Waley, *The Tale of Genji: A Novel in Six Parts by Lady Murasaki* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935); Edwin A. Cranston, trans., *The Izumi Shikibu Diary: A Romance of the Heian Court* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), or the translation by Earl Miner in his *Japanese Poetic Diaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Richard Bowring, trans., *Murasaki Shikibu, Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs: A Translation and Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Ivan Morris, trans., *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); Ivan Morris, trans., *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams: Recollections of a Woman in Eleventh Century Japan [Sarashina nikki]* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1971).

nese prose. That the writing of women played such an important role in the creation of a national literary tradition is certainly an anomaly in world literary history. *Kagerō Diary* is one of the first of these foundation texts by women and therefore deserves special interest as a pioneering work. Moreover, it is fascinating how relevant this text is to issues of women's writing in a contemporary global context.

Examined closely, there are many things in the diary's opening statement to catch the attention of someone attuned to contemporary literary discussions about the nature of autobiography and the possibility of a female voice in literature. One of the first things one notices is that the author sets out to record her own life as a sort of antiromance. She makes reference to all the old tales (in Japanese, *monogatari*) that "are just so much fantasy." The age this author lived in is now known as the age of *monogatari*, "tale" or "romance" literature.³ Most of the *monogatari* extant from this period—with the great *Tale of Genji* at the top of the list—actually date from the generation after Michitsuna's Mother, that is, from about 1000 to the end of the twelfth century. However, reading back through later tales, it is evident that some of the tales Michitsuna's Mother likely had in mind were works in which men and women fell in love and lived happily ever after, whereas her own story as told in this diary could be subtitled, "I married the prince and we didn't live happily ever after." In that sense, she is writing about a "real" life.

It is noteworthy in the context of world literary history that this author should consider her life worth writing about at all. A woman's personal life, whether in fiction or writing of the self, does not become a topic worthy of attention in world literature elsewhere until very recently indeed. Her urge to record her life does not appear to stem from a perception that her life was extraordinary or that she played some important role in society. She describes herself both as "married to a highly placed man" and as "being really nobody." She was indeed a member of a small aristocracy; the narrowness of its parameters will become apparent as one reads this diary, if only because almost all the people she mentions are related to one another. Her husband belonged to the most powerful branch of the Fujiwara family and had a brilliant political career. She herself, however, came from the provincial governors' class, which had little social prestige. (More details about the provincial governors' class will be provided in the next section.) Moreover, if, as is generally supposed, she started setting down this account of her life around 971 when her marriage was approaching its crisis, she would have been acutely aware of the obscurity awaiting her after the dissolution of her marriage. Her life was undistin-

3. Akiyama Ken, *Ōcchō joryū bungaku no seban* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1972), 209.

guished as she judged it by the standards of her own world, which makes her will to record it all the more remarkable.

It has been noted by more than one scholar of the text that the *Kagerō Diary's* author contributed a realistic mode of writing to Japanese prose. Edward Seidensticker, who did the first complete English translation of the text, says of it, "It is the first attempt in Japanese literature . . . to capture on paper, without evasion or idealization, the elements of a real social situation."⁴ However, in struggling to write against romance, she was nonetheless caught in it. Rachel Brownstein, in her study on the fascination of the heroine for women readers of the English novel, makes an observation that also casts light on the situation of the author of the *Kagerō Diary*:

The history of both women and fiction has been influenced by the fact that the self has been identified, in novels, with the feminine. The idea of becoming a heroine marries the female protagonist to the marriage plot, and it marries the woman who reads to fiction.⁵

Fictional narrative in the *Kagerō Diary* author's period, extrapolating from later examples like *The Tale of Genji*, was just as concerned with the "marriage plot" or the "romance story" as the English novels of Jane Austen or the Bronie sisters. In addition to "romantic fiction," there was also a literary tradition of love poetry that married women to an imagined world of romance. That world of romance had a powerful pull for the *Kagerō Diary* author. Despite her apparent intention to write against that tradition, the episodes she chooses to narrate from her life are often those moments when her marriage lived up to the romantic ideal. The self the author constructed in this diary was inextricably mixed with the notion of a romantic heroine. Thus, this text too can be examined just as fruitfully as the novels of the grand tradition in English literature to provide insight into the question of "how the self and self-consciousness are mutually and problematically involved, and involved in literary forms and language."⁶

Another noteworthy aspect of the diarist's opening passage is that she equates writing about her life with writing about her marriage. Is it not fascinating that one of the earliest self-writings in the world by a woman should have a relationship at its core? Estelle Jelinek, in her study *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography from Antiquity to the Present*, states,

4. Edward Seidensticker, *The Grasshopper Years: The Diary of a Noblewoman of Heian Japan* [*Kagerō Nikki*] (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1964 [1985 reprint]), 14.

5. Rachel M. Brownstein, *Becoming a Heroine: Reading About Women in Novels* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), xvi.

6. Brownstein, *Becoming a Heroine*, xxi.

"the subjects that women write about are remarkably similar: family, close friends, domestic activities."⁷ The *Kagerō Diary* supports her thesis. Here we have a record from a thousand years ago of a woman's domestic life as it is bound up in her relations with others. The principal relationship is with her husband, but her relationship with her son and the triangular relationship between the three of them is drawn in some detail as well. This diary can stand as a document of husband and wife relations. I suspect the reader will be amazed how much commonality exists between her marital relationship and contemporary ones, if only in the difficulty of communication between husband and wife.

The author mentions in the opening passage how "the events of the months and years gone by are vague," acknowledging the fallibility of memory and suggesting that all that is written in the text may not actually be as it happened. The psychological sophistication of this observation stands out. The recognition of the mutability of mental states and that memory distorts and invents are realizations of the modern age in the West. Another related perception underlying the opening passage is the awareness of the author's life as a story. She does not claim it for the truth; she says only that the diary of an ordinary life might be "novel." Note how she starts the opening passage by talking about herself in the third person as though she were a character in a tale and gradually shifts over to the first person perspective. This awareness of the fictiveness of her telling is borne out throughout the text by her preference in the original for a type of perfective verb ending associated with storytelling. Again, in Western literature it is a comparatively recent revelation that, since life as it occurs is formless in its plethora of experience, one has in some sense fictionalized one's life the moment one writes it down as a narrative. In this awareness as well, she seems strangely close to a modern Western perspective. It is almost as though she might agree with Paul Eakin that "autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and, further, that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure."⁸

If we attend to the style of this opening passage, we see a sentence that is both sinuous and disjunctive, something close to "stream of consciousness." Jelinek notes that in women's autobiography through the ages the prevalent style is "episodic and anecdotal, nonchronological and disjunctive."⁹ It is intriguing that such characteristics should show up in a

7. Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography from Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Twayne, 1986), xlii.

8. Paul John Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 3.

9. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography*, xlii.

woman's text completely outside the Western tradition. I see this text as a pertinent document for the inquiry that Virginia Woolf initiated in *A Room of One's Own* about the possibility and nature of a "woman's sentence."¹⁰ I do not raise this issue to take a position on whether there is an "essential" woman's style in writing. In my view, the question of whether there is such a thing can produce valuable discoveries without being taken to closure.

By signaling the aspects of this text that resonate with lively debates going on in modern literary circles about autobiography and the nature of feminine difference in literary style, I emphasize the relevance and accessibility of the *Kagerō Diary* for modern Western readers. However, there are other aspects of this text that distance it. It remains a voice from a very different time and culture, and we need to imaginatively reconstruct the author's historical and linguistic context in order to hear that voice. The remaining chapters of the introduction will provide that context, but there is one necessary and overarching piece of information that a modern English reader needs to respond to the text, namely, that the text comes out of a discourse of sorrow. We do not often reflect upon the fact that we are all caught in the discourse of our time and place. We grow unconsciously into what it is possible to think and say within our culture, our gender, and from our position in the world. The wrapper of language we live in shifts with time, since new modes of thought and language are constantly being invented. Moreover, we are not in a single unitary envelope of discourse, but rather various overlapping discourses. For more than a century, part of a discourse shared by most modern Western readers entails a positive stance vis-à-vis the world. I would suggest that, particularly when we read accounts of people's "real" lives, we are unconsciously looking for the success of their struggle, how they took command of their own minds and lives. Furthermore, we have very little patience for people complaining. People should not complain, they should do something about their lives. From a perspective like that, this diary may look like one long self-indulgent whine.

However, the world did not occur that way to the author and others of her age. One of the dominant discourses of her age was Buddhism, which starts from the premise, "Life is suffering." To come to an intimate knowledge of suffering so that one is no longer fooled by the pleasures of the world is part of the process of enlightenment. That basic conception of life was modulated through a Japanese literary tradition of *mono no aware*, sometimes translated as the "ahness of things" because *aware* etymologically is onomatopoeia for a sigh. We are most often moved

10. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 72-73.

to sigh by sadness, so *aware* is clearly used in some contexts to mean "sadness." The *mono no* is problematic: it can mean simply "of things," so another translation for *mono no aware* is "the sadness of things." However, *mono* has embedded in it a sense of the supernatural, the mysterious power in things, as in the phrase *mono no ke*, literally, "the spirit of things," but meaning "spirit possession." This aspect of the phrase communicates a sense of awe with respect to the world, encompassing nature and humanity. Thus the phrase *mono no aware* takes its place among a legion of aesthetic terms in Japanese literature and art that resist precise definition but convey a wealth of connotation. *Aware*, at least for the purposes of appreciating this diary, may be understood as a fine-tuned sensitivity to the transience of things, an awareness that things are most precious just when their loss is imminent. This sensitivity was requisite for participating in another one of the most powerful discourses of the age, poetry. Love is a principal subject for poetry in the Japanese tradition, and the tone of expression in love poetry is almost exclusively that of yearning or lamentation—the burning longing to be with the lover, and lamentation if desire is denied or when the "thrill is gone."

The use here of a blues lyric is deliberate. The possible analogy with the blues opened up my own appreciation of the entire genre of Heian poetry, and this diary in particular. For its fans, at least, the blues produces joy; its particular alchemy is to turn pain into pleasure. Part of this transformation rests in the power of expression for expression's sake. Pain expressed is pain released. In terms of an art form, it is the artistry of the expression that contributes the pleasure. If one imagines removing the music and the timbre of the singer's voice from a blues song and paraphrasing its lyrics, one would be left with repetitive whining and grating complaint. That is what I felt we had so far in translations of the *Kagerō Diary*. We had the content of her complaining but not its style, not the artistry of its expression.

There is a further complexity to this. Given that the literary discourse of her time was designed for the expression of sorrow, even if she should want to convey the joy in her marriage, it might have to be channeled through the discourse of sorrow. I am indebted for this revelation to conversations with two Japanese scholars, Akiyama Ken and Kondō Jun'ichirō. On separate occasions, both scholars expressed the same view to me that an underlying message in the diary, particularly in book one, was the author's pride in the splendor of her marriage. This view shifted my perception of the diary a hundred and eighty degrees. There was no room in the discourse of the age to say: "See how much he loved me. He came to visit me every night. It was noticeable when he did not visit for even one

day." Or, "Look what fine poems he wrote for me; see what a hold I had over him." Or, "We had been married for fourteen years or more and he still felt moved to come all the way to meet me at Uji when I was returning from a trip." Judged by the standards of the time, her marriage was an excellent one. Moreover, one wonders why a text that apparently heaps so much criticism on the powerful head of the Fujiwara clan would have been allowed to survive. There is a distinct possibility that far from being disgruntled by her account of their marriage, her husband may have taken pride in it. He did not have time to compile his own poetry anthology, so she did it for him and his prowess in poetry was recorded for posterity.¹¹

Intriguing and revealing as such perceptions are, the litany of sorrow and the delineation of depression in this text cannot all be understood as a paradoxical affirmation of the success of her marriage. This diary is also a record of the death of her marriage and her struggle to find a reason for living once it was no longer possible to exchange poetry with her husband. She was an artist; to write poetry was an important reason for living. Although nowhere does the author state it explicitly, she writes herself to freedom through this record. When one of my Japanese colleagues heard that I was going to study this text and that my inspiration for embarking on the project was related to feminism, she cautioned me not to characterize the author of the diary as an oppressed woman or the diary itself as a record of protest against unjust treatment at the hands of men.¹² Her reason for objecting to such an approach was that it was anachronistic. It projected the attitudes and perception of our time and culture onto a text from a totally different milieu. She went on to say, however, that she felt the text should be looked upon as a kind of therapy for the author. I wondered, was not "therapy" a concept from our own time and culture? Yet I agreed with her. The process of writing the diary seems to have given the author some distance from her situation. She writes herself into some sort of freedom, which for her was the possibility of living without her husband. The Japanese scholar Shinozuka Sumiko has explored the interpretation of the *Kagerō Diary* as a kind of therapy for the author.¹³ In explicating a passage where Michitsuna's Mother regains her health after having written down her feelings in a letter to be opened

11. I am indebted for this insight to an article by Joshua Mostow, "The Amorous Statesman and the Poetess: The Politics of Autobiography and the *Kagerō Nikki*," *Japan Forum* 4.2 (October 1992): 305-15.

12. The *Kagerō Diary* has already been characterized in this manner by someone who would not perhaps welcome the label of "feminist." In his preface to *The Gossemer Years*, Seidensticker says that "the diary is in a sense her protest against the marriage system of her time, and her exposition of the thesis that men are beasts" (8-9).

13. Shinozuka Sumiko, *Kagerō nitshi no kokoro to hyōgen* (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1995), 69-71.

should she die, Shinozuka even suggests that language itself was "the spring" Michitsuna's Mother used to bring herself back to health.¹⁴ Perhaps it can even be said that, for the *Kagerō Diary* author, language was a means of creating a self with the power to live.

The issue of the relation between language and the construction of the self brings the discussion in a full circle back to the common ground between the *Kagerō Diary* and contemporary literary concerns. There has been a worldwide explosion in women's writing in this century, particularly in the last fifty years. There has also been a major effort by feminist scholars to reclaim writing by women in the past which has been abandoned or pushed to the margins of the literary heritage. All this is a worthy enterprise because when one scans the last two thousand years of human history, women's expression is conspicuous in its absence. It is within this enterprise that I claim the *Kagerō Diary* author as ancestress for us all in the writing of the self and commend her to your attention and reading pleasure.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The author of the *Kagerō Diary* lived in the middle of the Heian period, a period of relative peace and stability. There were no significant military threats to the authority of the imperial court from either within or outside the nation. The court had taken the decision in the early Heian period to cease official communication with China, thus effectively isolating the country from the rest of Asia. The aristocratic society of the capital of Heian (present-day Kyoto) had turned inward and its members were only interested in what went on in the capital city. Within that society, women's society also had an insular quality.

Although the Heian world is a thousand years removed from the present, there is a surprisingly rich historical record from which to draw information. To begin with, there is the comprehensive *Sompi bunmyaku*,¹⁵ which gives genealogies and career records for virtually all male upper echelon aristocrats of the Heian period as well as some anecdotal material about prominent figures. Furthermore, several of the diaries in Chinese by men of the court are extant, and, while rather dry and short on personal revelations, they are good sources for the chronology, protocol, and names of participants for court ceremonies and other noteworthy events. By contrast, the fictional and autobiographical texts in Japanese, mainly of fe-

14. *Ibid.*, 217.

15. *Sompi bunmyaku*, vols. 58-60 in Kuroita Katsumi, ed., *Kokusho taiketsu*, 66 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1924-64). The *Sompi bunmyaku* was compiled toward the end of the fourteenth century on the basis of a large number of earlier documents.

male authorship (the *Kagerō Diary* included), give a detailed picture of the personal side of life. Finally there are two lengthy histories written in the mid to late Heian period. One, the *Eiga monogatari*,¹⁶ is by a woman, perhaps with additions from other women, and the other, the *Okagami*,¹⁷ is written by a man. Both histories are in the Japanese language and include fictional elements, and both focus on the history of the Fujiwara family as it reaches its apogee in the career of Fujiwara Michinaga, who is incidentally the son by another wife of the husband of the *Kagerō Diary* author. The two texts are valuable documents for social and political history. With such a wealth of resources, the difficulty lies in choosing which material to relate. The following outline of the historical context of the diary will concentrate on the information that makes the accounts in the diary more comprehensible and will accordingly focus on social rather than political history.

Marriage and Familial Relations

Since the story of a marriage is at the core of this diary, let us start with Heian marriage customs.¹⁸ The most salient and foreign feature of marriage at this period is that husband and wife did not normally live together, particularly in the early part of their marriage. Although the husband would often end up living in the house of the wife who had the most children once the children were of marriageable age, virtually all marriages began as "visiting" arrangements. The husband would visit the wife's home where she resided with her mother and extended maternal family. Moreover, polygyny was common for men, so a man might be involved in a visiting marriage with two or more households, as well as conducting casual liaisons on a sporadic basis. Sometimes, from a contemporary Western point of view, it is difficult to distinguish how in the Heian period formal marriage was much different from a casual liaison.

16. *Eiga monogatari*. Citations will be to the English translation by William H. McCullough and Helen Craig McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980).

17. *Okagami*. Citations will generally be to the English translation by Helen Craig McCullough, *Okagami, The Great Mirror: Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027) and His Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

18. There is an excellent article on Heian marriage customs by William H. McCullough, "Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 27 (1967): 103-7. The succeeding account draws heavily on that article, but also incorporates observations from fictional and autobiographical texts of the period. A more recent article by Peter Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality: Kinship, Property, and Politics in the Mid-Heian Period," *Monsumenta Nipponica* 48.4 (1993): 429-67, while relying on the same basic data as the McCullough article, has a more detailed analysis of the power relations involved in the Heian marriage institution.

Indeed, the very marriage ceremony itself appears to mimic secret affairs. For example, the meeting of the couple was preceded by the exchange of poetry in both marriages and affairs. Once the correspondence had reached a certain level of intimacy, the groom would visit the bride's house under the cover of night and sleep with her. In most cases, this would be the first time the couple would have met one another in person. Both the first and second night, the groom would leave before dawn as though it were a secret tryst. On the third night—it was his coming three nights in a row that actually constituted the wedding—he would stay until morning, at which point the parents would welcome him and he would eat special cakes with his new bride. One can imagine the humiliation for a young woman and her family if the groom only visited once or twice and never returned.

Often the first marriage for a young man would be arranged by his family to cement political alliances, but he would go courting for his other marriages. In the case of the *Kagerō Diary* author's marriage, it was a first marriage for her and a second marriage for him. The author registers annoyance that her husband did not come courting properly, which would have meant cultivating a connection with a female member of her household so that he could deliver love letters to her secretly (cf. p. 57). This would have been more like a secret affair and therefore more romantic. Instead her prospective husband went first to her father and seems to have pursued his objective in a casual way. Her husband was of a much higher status than the author's father and likely did not expect the father or the daughter to resist the proposal. Nonetheless, they performed a three- or four-month courtship through the medium of poetry. The author must have known of the existence of her husband's first wife who had already borne him a son, since much later she remarks that she had corresponded with the woman before (cf. p. 75), but she does not mention the first wife at all in the account of the beginning of her own marriage.

Views of marriage customs in the Heian period have been distorted by assuming that society actually followed the Yōrō legal code modeled after Chinese laws and instituted during the eighth century.¹⁹ In that code, there was a clear hierarchy of first wife, second wife, and concubines. In reality, the situation in Heian Japan was much more fluid. There was a notion of "principal" wife, which was not always determined by order of marriage. It was the social status and material wealth of the wife's family that determined whether she would be considered the principal wife. If two wives were of roughly the same social status, as was the case with the *Kagerō Diary* author and her husband's first wife, then the

19. William McCullough, "Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period," 105-6.

wife's position would often come to depend on the number of children she had. As will be explained in more detail below in the section on Heian politics, children were political capital, so the more the better and the more powerful the wife's position.

Children were raised in the mother's home, which made the ties between the children and their maternal relatives much stronger than with their paternal relatives. Likewise the relations between siblings of the same mother were generally closer than those that shared only the same father. Given that polygyny was the common practice, most people had half siblings of one kind or another.

Aristocratic society within the capital was very small and closed, so that marriages among near relatives were common. Marital connection was only forbidden between parents and children, and brothers and sisters. This meant that cousins, uncles and nieces, aunts and nephews could and did marry. For example, in book three of the *Kagerō Diary*, the author adopts a daughter born from her husband's casual affair of several years before (cf. pp. 285-95). This adopted daughter comes to be courted by her husband's younger brother from a different mother. In contemporary Western terms, it would be like an uncle courting his niece. However, given the lack of close contact between families of different mothers, this younger brother actually seems very distant from his elder brother, never having seen either his sister-in-law or her adopted daughter, his niece. Indeed, his courting ends without his actually having seen either woman.

Women were not normally seen by any men other than their fathers, brothers of the same mother, husbands, and sons. Aristocratic women tried to be seen by as few people as possible. Even when they went outside, they generally traveled in curtained carriages. They held audiences from behind screens. For a woman, allowing oneself to be seen by a man was tantamount to inviting violation, and the literature of the period abounds in "peeping tom" scenes. The only aristocratic women exempt from keeping themselves hidden were women who served at court whose duties exposed them.

Economic Foundations

As mentioned above, women normally lived out their lives in the homes of their mothers. Residences within the capital were usually inherited along the female line, and this provided women with an independent economic base. If Virginia Woolf is right and the prerequisite for a woman becoming a writer is "money and a room of her own,"²⁰ then aristocratic women of

20. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 6.

the Heian period had met that prerequisite. It might go a long way toward explaining why there was such a flowering of women's writing during the period.

The author of the *Kagerō Diary* shifts residences four times. She starts out in the house of her mother; after about eleven years of marriage she moves to a house apparently owned by her husband close to his official residence, then moves back to her maternal home, and finally to a house on the outskirts of the city owned by her father. At no time, however, is she exclusively dependent on her husband's resources, although a remark she drops here and there seems to indicate she expects him to contribute to the upkeep of her dwelling (cf. pp. 133-35). There is some indication in fictional texts of the period, like *The Tale of Genji*, that the husband contributed support in terms of building materials and workmen's labor to the houses of women recognized as wives. It is also evident from fiction that one of the rarest but most romantic situations was for the husband to provide a separate house, separate that is from both their parents, for husband and wife to live in.²¹ In the early part of book two, the author's husband, Kaneie, begins construction of a splendid residence. When he talks about showing it to her, the author, in spite of her better judgment, begins to hope that he intends it as a house for them both to dwell in (cf. p. 175).

Besides providing some assistance with maintenance of the wife's housing, the husband also seems to have been expected to provide material assistance for religious observances in the way of offerings and rewards for officiating monks. Undoubtedly, however, the husband's major contribution to the marriage in a practical sense was overseeing the careers of the children, by arranging good marriages or posts as ladies-in-waiting at court for the daughters and seeking political advancement for the sons.

The most important contribution of women to the marriage was the bearing and raising of the children. The next most important contribution was the production of clothes for the husband. In several places the *Kagerō Diary* notes orders for clothing. Participating in government required elaborate costumes. From the detailed descriptions of costume in virtually all the literary works of the age, we know how important clothes were to the people of that society. Moreover, bolts of cloth themselves were a form of currency, and garments were one of the most common forms of reward or payment. The reader will note in the diary numerous occasions where garments are bestowed on people for services.

21. Examples of this from fiction of the period include Genji's establishment of the young Murasaki in the Nijō residence in *The Tale of Genji*, and the hero in *Ochikubō monogatari* providing a mansion for the Cinderella-like heroine.

It was possible for aristocratic women to work outside the home by serving at court either by holding official positions such as that of *naisibi no kami*, principal handmaid, or by being employed privately as members of the entourages of empresses and imperial consorts. This latter was the case of writers like Murasaki Shikibu, Izumi Shikibu, and Sei Shōnagon. Such private ladies-in-waiting served as companions by creating amusements and making an impression on others through the writing of poetry and by participation in concerts. It was out of this kind of salon society that *The Tale of Genji* was born. There was a considerable amount of prestige attached to serving at court. Of the famous women writers of this period, only the author of the *Kagerō Diary* did not serve at court. Thus, her voice is the only one we have for the secluded married woman.

Michitsuna's Mother did share one characteristic with the other women writers of the period, and that was class background. She, like all the others, came from the provincial governor's class. This was the middle echelon of the aristocracy. Serving as a provincial governor offered many opportunities for material enrichment since the provinces were where wealth was actually produced, but since it meant living for periods of time away from the capital, the center of the universe, it carried a social taint. The daughters of provincial governors, however, were in a good place strategically to marry up the social ladder. The marriage of Michitsuna's Mother may be interpreted as a "marriage up."

The Personal Is Political, Heian-Period Style

Undoubtedly, the aspect of political life that impacted women's lives the most directly was marriage politics. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Fujiwara clan in particular was able to exercise hegemonic control over the imperial family, and hence the nation, by marrying their daughters into the imperial line and assuring that all emperors and potential emperors had Fujiwara mothers. As mentioned above in the section on familial relations, children were generally raised within the mother's family. One exception to this was the emperor's family. The emperor's offspring were raised within the palace. However, the emperor's children were always born in the house of their mothers (birth was considered a pollution because of its connection with blood and therefore was prohibited from taking place in the palace), and the closest relatives would always be the mother's relatives. Since the custom was frequently to have an emperor ascend the throne as a child or adolescent, the regent would usually be the emperor's maternal grandfather. Thus it was not only through grosser forms of power that Fujiwara clan chieftains controlled the imperial office, it was also through the family bonds of grandfather and grand-

son. Accordingly the Fujiwara leaders found dependence and weakness on the part of emperors useful. The Reizei emperor, who reigned briefly from 967-69, was actually mentally deranged. Within the interpretative framework of the time, he was considered to be suffering from "spirit possession." Even though he ascended the throne as an adult, there was need for a regent. This set a precedent for the future, and *Ōkagami* notes cannily, "It is precisely because of Emperor Reizei that the Fujiwara lords still flourish."²²

Since marriage into the imperial line was the basis of Fujiwara power, it was important for this clan to have a good supply of daughters. This is why the author of the *Kagerō Diary* hints at the beginning of book three that she laments having only one son (cf. p. 285). More children would have been best, but if she had to have only one child, she would have been better off with a daughter. Mother of an empress was a prestigious position. Of course, without sons to assure the continuity of the Fujiwara lineage, the clan was in difficulty too. Thus, both sons and daughters were important for the game of marriage politics.

Women were important to marriage politics as prospective consorts and bearers of the next generation of players. Nonetheless, this kind of importance is different from actually holding office or making decisions about such things as promotions and allocations of estates, the "real" expressions of power. In fact, the question of how much women knew about or participated from behind the scenes in the realpolitik of the era is an intriguing one. Sometimes it seems they could play a direct role. *Ōkagami* records that the appointment of Michinaga to minister of the right, the appointment that paved the way for his total domination of court life for the next two decades, was finally secured by the tearful entreaties of his sister Senshi, the emperor's mother. It is described thus:

After an interval long enough to excite painful misgivings, she [Senshi] opened the door and came out, wearing a triumphant smile on her flushed, tear-stained face. "At last! The decree has been issued!" she told him.²³

This passage gives a vivid sense of Senshi's participation in political affairs. Nonetheless, what is also abundantly clear from the literary works of the period is that the dominant literary discourse, created largely in the hands of women, had little place for the discussion of the overtly political. There seems to have been a code of etiquette that required women to censor themselves about political observation.

22. Helen McCullough, *Ōkagami*, 138.

23. *Ibid.*, 199.

The most interesting case with respect to the *Kagerō Diary* is the account in the text of the most shocking political event of the era, the arrest and exile of Minamoto Takaakira,²⁴ known to posterity as the Anna Era Incident, because it happened in 969, the second year of the Anna era. A little background to the affair is in order.

In 969, Minamoto Takaakira was the minister of the left, nominally the most important position within the Heian government. As his Minamoto surname indicates, he was of imperial lineage, being the son of Emperor Daigo (885-930). The Minamoto surname was given to imperial offspring who lacked sufficient backing to be placed in the line of succession. Nonetheless, his imperial lineage gave him preferment in office, and thus he had come to occupy this powerful office. He had also married a Fujiwara woman, San no Kami, third daughter of Morosuke, father to Kaneie, the *Kagerō Diary* author's husband. Thus, San no Kami was a sister to Kaneie, albeit by a different mother. This should have assured him friendly relations with the main branch of the Fujiwara clan, but the room for ascendancy by forming alliances with the imperial family was just too narrow to avoid ferocious competition even among those closely related.

The occasion for the breakdown was Takaakira's marriage of his daughter to Prince Tamehira, fourth and favorite son of Emperor Murakami. Everyone expected Tamehira to be named the next crown prince after the present crown prince had ascended the throne. Takaakira's marrying his daughter to Tamehira brought him into direct competition with the main Fujiwara family, whose goal was always to have the reigning emperor's principal consort be a Fujiwara woman. When Emperor Murakami died in 967, his second son succeeded to the throne as Emperor Reizei, but a year later, Tamehira was passed over for designation as crown prince in favor of the fifth son, who was a mere child of nine years old. As *Eiga monogatari* puts it succinctly, Tamehira "lost the throne when he married Takaakira's daughter."²⁵ *Ōkagami* gives a more explicit analysis:

Power would have shifted to Takaakira's family if Prince Tamehira had become Emperor, and the Genji [that is, the Minamoto] would have been the ones to prosper, so the Prince's resourceful uncles [Tamehira's mother, Anshi, was a full sister to Kaneie and his brothers] solved the problem by making his younger brother the heir apparent, even though it was contrary to the natural order of things.²⁶

24. Seidensticker in *The Gossamer Years* and McCullough and McCullough in *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* give the reading of Takaaki for this name. I follow *Zenshū* with this reading of Takaakira (*Zenshū*, 108).

25. McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 99.

26. Helen McCullough, *Ōkagami*, 129-30.

The chagrin of Takaakira about this was apparent to all. As a way to put his political ambitions completely out of the way, charges that he was plotting to overthrow the current emperor were leveled against him, and he was exiled to Kyushu as provisional governor-general of Daizaifu.²⁷ To see one of their own in such a high position brought so low shocked all members of the aristocracy.

As mentioned above, this is the only political event to find its way into the *Kagerō Diary*. What is interesting, however, is that the author's sympathies are entirely with Takaakira and particularly his wife. She writes of her sorrow over the news of the event and composes a long poem of condolence for Takaakira's wife (cf. pp. 179-83), who, it will be remembered, is a half sister to her husband. Nowhere in her relation of the events concerning Takaakira's fall does she indicate even obliquely that she is aware her husband is one of the chief engineers of the conspiracy that brought Takaakira down. Either she is totally ignorant of her husband's role or it cannot be mentioned.

Most interesting of all, she feels she must defend recording the incident at all. This is one place where she acknowledges that she has a conscious idea about what is appropriate for including in the diary. She writes:

In a diary only for things related to me personally, this is perhaps something that shouldn't have been included; however, since the deep feelings of sadness about it were my own and not anyone else's, I recorded it. (cf. p. 173)

There are many things to tease out from this short passage. One is that the author is clearly operating from the assumption that her writing and perhaps by extension all women's writing should be restricted to personal life. The only excuse for mentioning the Takaakira affair is that it made her personally sad. It might be tempting to read into this that she is actually inhibited by an unwritten code of censorship that prevents her from mentioning her husband's role in the affair or expressing any chagrin over it. One might point to the fact that the narration of the Takaakira incident is placed in book two, which is where her own relations with her husband is placed in book two, and perhaps she is identifying with those her husband has harmed because she is already feeling alienated from him. However, I think that would be a forced reading. In the immediate context of book two, right after bringing up the Takaakira incident, she records a poetry exchange with her husband that expresses intimacy. Moreover, there is no place in the diary where she displays any interest at all in her husband's

27. McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 100.

official career except to lament that his rise in status actually strains the relationship because it makes it harder for him to find time to visit. In fact, the only time she is happy about an appointment of his is when he is unhappy about it. In book one, her husband, much to his distaste, is given a post in the Ministry of War, the least prestigious of the Heian government ministries, and so he stops going to work. This means he has a lot more time to spend with her, which makes her happy.

Clearly, so far as her persona in the diary is concerned, she is totally uninterested in the public career of her husband except in how it affects his availability to her. Moreover, in places she actually seems to have an inaccurate perception of what is going on. In book three for example, after the death of her husband's elder brother, Koremasa,²⁸ she interprets the situation as fortunate for her husband (cf. p. 319) when in actual fact, her husband's second oldest brother, Kanemichi, who assumes great power at this point, is dedicated to destroying her husband's career. This mistaken perception on her part seems to be proof that indeed she was ignorant as well as uninterested in her husband's political affairs.

Yet, how is it possible that she could ignore something so vital to the advancement of her own father and son? It is clear their careers depended exclusively on the career of her husband. There is even a place where she hints at her own knowledge of that. In book three, she ends a passage of lament over her husband's recent promotion by saying of her son that "although he cannot say anything, he seems secretly very pleased." Is her lack of interest in her husband's political affairs in the end a literary pose? Since the literary discourse she was helping to shape was derived essentially from lyric poetry and had at its core the subtle expression of feeling limited to love and sorrow, calculation about what such and such a political promotion might mean to her own family members did not have a place in it. That said, as she constructed and was being constructed by that discourse, it also became her reality. Perhaps she could not care about his political career because it did not fit into the discourse with which she was constructing her life. In this sense, a literary pose ceases to be a trivial thing.

Women's "Education"

There was no formal education for women in the Heian period, but reading between the lines of the fictional and autobiographical writings of the era, it is clear how rigorous women's informal education was. The training

28. Again, there seems to be some disagreement over the correct reading for this name. Seidensticker in *The Gossamer Years* and McCullough and McCullough in *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes* give Koretada as the reading. I follow *Zenshū* by giving Koremasa (*Zenshū*, 90).

was exclusively in the arts with poetry, calligraphy, and music as a foundation. For example, one Fujiwara patriarch's advice to his daughter was:

First you must study penmanship [calligraphy]. Next you must learn to play the seven-string zither better than anyone else. And also you must memorize all the poems in the twenty books of the Kokin Shū.²⁹

Poetry and calligraphy went together because one of the primary methods for learning both of them was copying the poems of the canon in the hands of acknowledged master calligraphers. In *The Tale of Genji* for example, one of the things that Genji takes great pains to assemble as part of his daughter's trousseau is a library of copybooks for calligraphy. "Having made the acquaintance of the more notable calligraphers, he commissioned from each a book or scroll for his daughter's library, into which only the works of the eminent and accomplished were to be admitted."³⁰ In this way, a woman's own hand in calligraphy developed as her understanding of the best poems of the past deepened. Since brush calligraphy was the basis for painting in the era, nearly all Heian aristocrats became accomplished artists as well. We might note the frequent reference in the *Kagerō Diary* to the author painting and the mention in the poem collection of her father bringing back paintings of Michinoku (cf. p. 387).

Of the three principle arts, music is the least mentioned in the *Kagerō Diary*, but it is there. There is the touching communication between the author and her aunt after the year's period of mourning for the author's mother is over and she finds herself playing the koto again (cf. pp. 121–23):

So the commemoration ceremony was complete, as usual I had nothing in particular to do. Without really intending to play, as I was dusting my koto, my fingers strayed to play a few notes and it struck me that indeed the period of mourning was over. Sadly, it had passed so quickly, as I was brooding on this, from my aunt came:

ima ha tote Now it is over,
hiki idzuru koto no yet when I hear these notes
ne wo kikeba plucked from the koto,
uchi kaheshitemo they run me back to the past
nahō zo kanashiki and I am even sadder.

At this, even though it was nothing very special, thinking about it, my tears overflowed:

29. Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1979), 221.
30. Seidensticker, *The Tale of Genji*, 520.

naki hito ha The day and month that
otodzure mo sede I cut the strings of my koto,
koto no wo wo since the one who had gone
tachishi tsuki hi zo could no longer hear me play,
kaheri ki ni keru that day has come round again.

Letters and Literature

It will be noted that the exchange above between two women in the same household takes place in writing. It was not uncommon even for people in the same dwelling to exchange letters with one another. This points out the special significance of correspondence in this society. For women in particular, it was the most important means of communication with the world because they were the stationary ones while the men visited here and there. The *Kagerō Diary* can be viewed in part as a record of the author's correspondence with the world and more specifically her husband. The Japanese scholar, Sumiko Shinozuka, has been researching parallels between the development of epistolary novels in eighteenth-century England and women's writing in Heian Japan. She writes:

In fact, truly speaking, not only the *Kagerō Diary* but the other women's diaries that followed as well can be considered a kind of long letter to one or several persons with whom the author was familiar. For instance, the *Kagerō Diary* can be assumed to be written as a letter to the author's adopted daughter.

... It was the *Kagerō Diary* that started this tradition in Japanese women's diaries of writing a text as though it were a kind of letter. Thus, the author of the *Kagerō Diary* could develop a way to describe her thoughts and feelings in her own natural Japanese, just like Richardson did in English.³¹

The critical role that letters played in women's lives and the literature they developed may have contributed to the identification between women and the hiragana script used to transcribe vernacular Japanese.

Hiragana Script: The "Woman's Hand"

The freedom for women to correspond was made possible by the evolution of a script for writing the vernacular Japanese language. This script

31. Sumiko Shinozuka, "Women, Letters, and Literature," unpublished address at the Institute of Early Women's Writing, University of Alberta, September 1993. See also her "Shokan to bungaku: 'Ritchadson no shokantai shōsetsu to kagerō nikki o chūshin ni,'" in *Kyōritsu: Kokusai bunka* 1.1 (March 1991): 135–45; and "Kagerō nikki to afura bein no shokantai shōsetsu," in Ikeda Tsuyako, ed., *Ōchō rikō no shōtokukyū* (Tokyo: Kasamashoin, 1995), 379–401.

was hiragana, and the date of its gaining full currency in the world at large is around 905, the date of the first imperially commissioned and quickly canonized anthology of poetry, the *Kokinshū*. Prior to this time, the only literacy possible was in the Chinese language.³² There are instances of women composing poems in Chinese in the earlier period.³³ Moreover, there is the famous account in the *Murasaki Shikibu Diary* (ca. 1010) of the author listening to her brother's lessons in Chinese and picking them up so much faster than her brother that her father was moved to say he wished she had been born a boy.³⁴ While that passage indicates that some Heian women still did acquire knowledge of Chinese, it was not considered useful knowledge for a woman, and women were not encouraged to pursue it. It was the evolution of the hiragana script that gave women the freedom to write the language they spoke. We know that women were quick to take advantage of it because the script came to be known as *onnade*, "woman's hand." Moreover, a mere three decades after the script had evolved, the writing of the native language in hiragana had come to be associated with women so thoroughly that Ki no Tsurayuki, the principle compiler and author of the Japanese preface to *Kokinshū*, felt compelled to take the persona of a woman in order to write a diary in the native language.³⁵

However, writing in *onnade* or "woman's hand" was never the exclusive preserve of women. In fact, the most famous examples of that kind of calligraphy that have been preserved are all in men's hands. Moreover, it seems that men did write a great number of literary texts in hiragana in the early part of the tenth century. Even the example given above of Ki no Tsurayuki writing in a woman's persona because he was writing in hiragana/*onnade* is also an indication of men doing substantial writing in that script.

The "Old Tales": Early Monogatari Literature

One area where it is assumed that men were the leaders in developing a native prose style was in *monogatari* or tale literature. There is a consensus that men wrote all the early romance literature, that is, prior to the

32. There was a rather cumbersome system of transcription for Japanese known as *manyōgana* developed in the eighth century, and while it played a critical role in making it possible to record some early Japanese texts, it was so difficult and complex that it did not become a generally practiced writing system. Writing in Chinese was the standard mode of writing.

33. For example, see the poem by Princess Uchiko (807-47) in Donald Keene, *Antibology of Japanese Literature, from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Grove, 1955), 164.

34. Bowring, *Murasaki Shikibu, Her Diary*, 139.

35. The "Tosa Diary" in Miner, *Japanese Poetic Diaries*.

eleventh century, but that the primary readers of the tale literature were women. An important piece of evidence indicating that the reading of romance literature was considered a preoccupation of women is from the eleventh-century *Tale of Genji*, the greatest tale of them all. In the novel, the hero Genji comes upon his foster daughter reading tales and chides her about her enthusiasm for such a trivial diversion. However, he admits to reading tales himself from time to time and then launches into the famous "apology for fiction" that places tale literature on a par with history. He says:

I have been rude and unfair to your romances, haven't I. They have set down and preserved happenings from the age of the gods to our own. The Chronicles of Japan and the rest are a mere fragment of the whole truth. It is your romances that fill in the details.³⁶

It is clear that by the time of *The Tale of Genji*, tale literature had been considered an amusement for women for a long time. *The Tale of Genji* author was a woman, but when the author of the *Kagerō Diary* talks about the odds and ends of the old tales that are just so much fantasy, it is assumed that the old tales she read would have been written by men. It is a curious situation in world literary history. We have the production of literature for women by men, and the question arises why would men devote so much energy to producing diversions for women? Akiyama Ken, in response to this question, said that the literature was likely produced by slightly lower class serving men in aristocratic households as part of their duties.³⁷ This might help explain why so much of the early tale literature was anonymous.

We are hampered in our knowledge of what kinds of tales the author of the *Kagerō Diary* was referring to by the fact that so few of the early tales have survived. Two extant tales that certainly predate the *Kagerō Diary* are *The Tales of Ise*³⁸ and *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*.³⁹ *The Tales of Ise* is actually a poem tale, that is, a collection of anecdotes that provide contexts for poems. *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* is a fantasy telling the story of a magical child who actually turns out to be a creature of the moon. Another extant tale that is thought to have existed at least in some

36. Seidensticker, *The Tale of Genji*, 437.

37. From a conversation with Akiyama Ken after his guest lecture at Tokyo Women's University in June 1994.

38. Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *The Tales of Ise: Lyrical Episodes from Tenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).

39. Donald Keene, trans., "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter," in Thomas J. Rimer, ed., *Modern Japanese Fiction and Its Traditions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

version before the time of the *Kagerō Diary* is *The Tale of Lady Ocbikubō*.⁴⁰ *Ocbikubō monogatari* contains no supernatural elements. It is the classic Cinderella story of a beautiful and good girl whose mother's death has left her at the mercy of her stepmother and ugly, selfish stepsisters. A handsome aristocrat finds out about her, courts her, and eventually marries her; they live happily ever after while her husband invents ingenious ways to wreak vengeance on her step-family. When the author of the *Kagerō Diary* talks about the tales being "so much fantasy," literally *soragoto*, "empty talk," we have no way of knowing for certain which kind of fantasy she is referring to, the supernatural fantasy of something like *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, or the idealized romance of the *Ocbikubō monogatari*, but it seems likely that she had works like the *Ocbikubō monogatari* in mind. At any rate, it can be asserted that another aspect of women's education was also in the prose literature of the tales, which was for the most part a literature of heroines that gave young women dreams of becoming heroines in their own domestic tales.

Religion

The religion of the Heian period was a syncretic mix of Buddhism and Shintoism, as is borne out in how religion appears in the *Kagerō Diary*. When the author of the *Kagerō Diary* articulates religious thoughts, they are usually of a Buddhist nature, the most common one being the awareness of the fragility of human existence. Take for example this poem that was written when she heard that the brother of the monk who had officiated at her mother's funeral had passed away suddenly (cf. p. 119):

omohiki ya	Who would have guessed,
kumo no mori wo	that he would leave behind
uchisutete	the forest of clouds
sora no keburi ni	and rise up with the smoke
tatamu mono to ha	disappearing into the sky.

Ceremonies held in conjunction with deaths in the family were Buddhist, since in Japan Buddhism had a virtual monopoly on the management of death through ritual. However, a lot of the religious activities the author participates in are Shinto. Her offering of poems at Shinto shrines and watching processions to the Kamo Shrine are all examples of Shinto activities. In fact, all the festivals mentioned in the diary are Shinto festivals.

The aspect of religion most foreign to modern Western readers is the elaborate system of taboos that evolved from what may be called the

40. Wilfred Whitehouse and Eizo Yamagisawa, trans., *The Tale of Lady Ocbikubō* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1965).

"science" of the time, Chinese yin-yang cosmology, as it was grafted onto a native body of beliefs regarding supernatural forces. Chinese cosmology was based on the movements of heavenly bodies and the movements of forces that could loosely be called gods. The astrological calendar determined which days were lucky and which unlucky. The movements of the forces in accordance with the calendar determined which directions were safe or dangerous. Perhaps the best way to convey the spirit of these taboos is to refer to the vestiges of them that remain in present-day Japanese society. For example, a *butsugetsu* day, the most inauspicious of the six designations for days, occurs four to five times a month in the Chinese calendar. Even in contemporary Japan, people customarily avoid that day for holding celebrations, as evidenced by the fact that wedding halls will give discounts to anyone willing to hold a wedding on a *butsugetsu* day. In the Heian period, not only was belief in this system very strong, but the elaboration of the system, particularly within aristocratic society, meant that many aspects of aristocrats' lives—when they could go places, in which directions they could move—were all impacted by this system. It became a calendar for one's life. Moreover, in the general absence of "public" holidays, the periods of ritual seclusion required within the system may have functioned as periods of rest for aristocrats. Someone of the status of Michinaga, for example, spent an average of seventy days a year in ritual seclusion.⁴¹

Not all taboos originated with the yin-yang cosmology; some came out of Buddhism and Shinto. For instance, Buddhism required a period of abstinence and seclusion before participating in certain rites. Shinto beliefs required abstinence and seclusion as ways of overcoming ritual defilement. In Shinto any contact with blood, sickness, or death incurs defilement. Hence menstruation required seclusion. The *Kagerō Diary* author's son must refrain from participating in a Shinto festival because he becomes defiled by accidentally seeing a dead dog (cf. p. 343).

Underlying all these various taboos was the belief that breaking the rules would result in misfortune. Yet a certain amount of negotiation with the rules was possible. If one visited a sick person, for example, one could avoid defilement by remaining standing at the threshold to the room. Likewise, if the rules demanded ritual seclusion and yet it seemed absolutely necessary to go out, as long as one stayed in one's carriage, seclusion had technically not been broken. Moreover, the system could sometimes serve as an excuse to avoid doing something one did not want to

41. Francine Hérail, *La cour du Japon à l'époque de Heian* (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1995), 226. Hérail provides a good general description of the yin-yang cosmology system in Heian Japan. McCullough and McCullough give a summary of the practice of ritual seclusion in a supplementary note to *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 784–85.

more, as a response to misfortune in one's life, such as the death of a loved one or a serious illness, taking the tonsure was regarded as a sad but understandable act. However, when a young man or woman without some tragedy as a catalyst but rather of their own volition became a monk or nun, it seems to have been upsetting to others. For example, in book one of the diary, Michitsuna's Mother mentions the sudden taking of the tonsure by a cousin of her husband, Fujiwara Sukemasa, who, as she says, "without warning, abandoned his mother and wife and stole away to Mt. Hiei" (cf. p. 145). People found this "shocking and sad."⁴² One gets the sense that such an act struck others as a mark of mental unbalance. In the *Kagerō Diary* author's case, when she goes on her retreat, not only is she too young for people to accept her becoming a nun as a form of retirement, but since the future of her son had not yet been settled, it would have appeared to be an antisocial act, virtually an abandonment of her duties. Moreover, it is possible that people would have inferred that her real motive for taking the tonsure was to embarrass and humiliate her husband rather than genuine religious commitment. Her husband's strong objection to her going on retreat seems to indicate he interpreted her actions in that light. In any case, the decision to take the tonsure except in certain conventional circumstances was fraught with social consequences. For Michitsuna's Mother, becoming a nun balanced on the edge between being a release and an act of resistance.

THE AUTHOR AND THE PEOPLE AROUND HER

We know exactly whose daughter, whose wife, and whose mother the author of the *Kagerō Diary* was, but we do not know her personal name. She has come down to posterity as Michitsuna's Mother. One reason why we do not know her personal name is that the personal names of women were not generally noted in genealogies. The only women whose personal names were recorded were the consorts, mothers, and grandmothers of emperors. However, there is another reason why women's names were lost, and that is because there was, and still is to a certain extent in Japan, a reserve with respect to the use of personal names. Men's personal names were for their public record, but those names, so far as we can tell from literature, were not used in daily life. A person was almost always referred to by his or her title or role. Not once in the *Kagerō Diary*, for example, does the author refer to her husband or son by their personal

42. One of Kaneie's younger brothers by a different mother, Takamitsu, also took the tonsure suddenly in 961. The disturbance this caused his family is recorded in the *Tōnomine sbōsbō monogatari* (Lynne Miyake, "Tōnomine sbōsbō monogatari: A Translation and Critical Study," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1985).

do. For example, later on in the *Kagerō Diary*, when relations between the author and her husband have become strained, it is curious how often her direction is forbidden to him. The author remarks herself that it seems to be only her direction that is forbidden (cf. p. 269). The very complexity of the system lent itself to this kind of use. The yin-yang calendar and various other taboos affected the ebb and flow of one's daily activities but remained an exterior aspect of religion.

The religious activity to which the author of the *Kagerō Diary* devotes the most attention and seriousness of purpose is pilgrimages, and she divides her efforts almost equally between Shinto and Buddhist sites. The rite of purification she goes to perform at Karasaki on Lake Biwa is a Shinto ritual. Her pilgrimages to Shinto sacred sites include the visits to the Kamo and Fushimi Inari shrines. Her pilgrimages to Buddhist sites are to Hase Temple and Ishiyama Temple. However, the reader will find it hard to distinguish her Shinto pilgrimages from her Buddhist ones, since the purpose of both kinds of pilgrimage seems to be the same—to pray for the fulfillment of a fervent desire. Moreover, that desire is invariably for some benefit in this life.

Sometimes the impetus for going on a pilgrimage seems to be something as lighthearted as sightseeing. In one place, the author is persuaded by her attendants, who say, "Let's go on a pilgrimage and view the maple leaves at the same time" (cf. p. 317). However, other times she seems driven to make a pilgrimage out of a sense of desperation. Her pilgrimage to Ishiyama Temple is such a case. As she describes it, she runs out of the house at dawn on foot (cf. p. 207). For someone unaccustomed to walking, the journey to Ishiyama on foot would be an act of self-abnegation. It appears that all her other pilgrimages were by ox carriage, the normal mode of transport for aristocrats in the capital area.

Undoubtedly, the most profound encounter with religion on the part of the *Kagerō Diary* author is her consideration of becoming a nun, which occurs in the latter part of book two (cf. pp. 233-53). The author goes on retreat to a Buddhist temple in a confused and tortured state of mind, and the thought of becoming a nun seems to offer the possibility of release. The occasions for and the meaning of becoming a nun in Heian Japan ought to be put in context here.

Buddhism had orders for both monks and nuns. Sometimes superfluous male offspring of aristocratic families were made monks as a way of providing them a sinecure, but that was seldom the reason a woman became a nun. Many aristocrats, both male and female, often took the tonsure in old age as a way of signaling withdrawal from activity in this world and entering preparation for the next. It was a form of "retirement," if you will, when no other formal kind of retirement was possible. Further-

names. She refers to her son as "the young one" until by an act of resistance he expresses his independence from her, and then she calls him by his official title (cf. p. 237), for to be an adult male in Heian aristocratic society was always to have a title of some kind. Thus, men's names were preserved in public records and women's names were for the most part lost because they did not have a public role.

It is not known exactly when Michitsuna's Mother was born. From a reference to a prediction about her own death that the author makes in the latter part of the diary, scholars surmise that she may have been thirty-seven years old that year because, by the Chinese astrological calendar, the thirty-third and thirty-seventh years of a woman's life were considered to be particularly dangerous. Calculating back from that year as her thirty-seventh, she would have been born about 936.⁴³ This would have made her between eighteen and nineteen at the time of her marriage, which also fits, so this view has become the accepted one.

Parents and Siblings

Her father was Fujiwara Tomoyasu. The Fujiwara clan dominated politics for most of the Heian period, but it was a huge family and Tomoyasu belonged to one of its less important branches. Since Tomoyasu's father had an undistinguished career and had taken posts as provincial governor, the family had descended to provincial governor class, from which it was virtually impossible to rise again to the higher ranks of the aristocracy.

Who the author's mother was is uncertain. Conjecture can only be made about the mother's identity from the author's relationship to her two brothers. The author is known to have had one older brother, Masayoshi (other possible reading, Masatō), and one younger brother, Nagayoshi (or Nagatō). These two sons of Tomoyasu had different mothers. Apparently Masayoshi's mother was Tonomonokami Harumichi's daughter and Nagayoshi's mother was Minamoto Mitomeru's daughter. However, there is no conclusive evidence as to which brother shared the same mother with her. In the *Kagerō Diary* itself, the author only makes reference to "my brother" without further specifics. However, given that the brother she exchanges poems with at the end of the mourning period for her mother in 964 must have been Masayoshi (because Nagayoshi would have been too young), the *Zenshū* commentators opt for the theory that she shared the same mother with Masayoshi.⁴⁴ Whoever the mother may have been, most of what is known about her is found in the diary itself. She hovers in the background of the first book as a steady influence. She is referred to

43. Oka Kazuo, *Michitsuna no*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1970 [1986 reprint]), 12.

44. *Zenshū*, 85-86.

literally in the diary as "the old fashioned person." The depth of the author's relationship with her mother can be gauged by the author's extreme reaction to her mother's death and the frequency with which she recalls her mother in later years.

If it is accepted that Masayoshi was the brother that shared the same mother with the author, then it would follow that all the references to a brother in the diary would be to him. Masayoshi is reported to have served as governor of Bizen and Iga provinces. He married a woman who was likely an elder sister of Sei Shōnagon, author of *The Pillow Book*.⁴⁵ The author's relations with Nagayoshi as a sibling with a different mother would have been more distant. However, Nagayoshi had a distinguished reputation as a poet, and it is conjectured that the brother and sister might have had some literary connection with one another. The most definite piece of evidence for that kind of contact is the record of the presence of both Nagayoshi and Michitsuna at a poetry contest sponsored by Retired Emperor Kazan in 986. Michitsuna presented one of his mother's poems as an entry in the contest.⁴⁶ Granted, this hardly qualifies as evidence of a close relationship; nonetheless, the feeling that a brother and sister who were both skilled poets must have had some interaction persists, and it has been suggested that it was Nagayoshi who compiled the anthology of the author's poetry that is appended to all extant manuscripts of the diary.⁴⁷

There were sisters in the family as well. In the first part of the diary, the author mentions a sister living in the same household who is visited by a husband, and it is assumed this is an elder sister (cf. p. 71). Other documents record that Fujiwara Tamemasa married a daughter of Tomoyasu, and so commentators assume his wife was that elder sister.⁴⁸ This sister leaves the household to live in a dwelling apparently provided by her husband and then follows that husband to a post in the provinces. Mention of Tamemasa and a daughter of Tamemasa (presumably the author's niece) comes up in the poetry collection at the end of the diary, which would indicate that the author maintained a close connection with her elder sister and Tamemasa through the years. The relationship through marriage with Tamemasa also links the author distantly with Murasaki Shikibu. Since the daughter of Tamemasa's younger brother was the mother of Murasaki Shikibu, the author would have been a great aunt (in-law) of Murasaki Shikibu. It is unlikely that there was any personal contact between these two authors, but this family connection may have been a route by which a manuscript of the *Kagerō Diary* could have come into

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Ibid.*, 86.

47. *Ibid.*, 87.

48. *Ibid.*

the hands of Murasaki Shikibu. Later in the diary, the author mentions another sister who is living with her. This is the sister we see with her at the beginning of book two jesting about starting off the New Year auspiciously (cf. p. 169). This sister also has a gentleman caller, and she stays with the author for part of her retreat to a temple in the middle part of the diary. It is assumed this was a younger sister. Finally, much later in the diary, the author sends a congratulatory poem to her father upon the birth of another daughter. This is many years after the death of the author's mother. It seems her father took a very young wife because the author herself is about thirty-six when this new younger sister is born. As a sister from a different mother, the relationship would not have been close in the first place, and the great difference in age would also have precluded much contact between the two. Nonetheless, it is curious that this sister was likely the mother of Sugawara Takasue's daughter, the author of the *Sarashina Diary*.⁴⁹ Through family ties of one kind or another, the *Kagerō Diary* author is a senior relative to three of the most important women authors in the Heian period.

Husband

So far as the diary is concerned, the most critical relationship in the author's life was with her husband. Her husband was Fujiwara Kaneie (929-90), the third son of Fujiwara Morosuke (908-60). Kaneie and the author shared the same great-great-grandfather in the Fujiwara lineage, but her husband's family was at that time the ascendant northern branch of the Fujiwara clan, which monopolized all the high offices at court. From the point of view of the author's father, this proposal must have seemed like a tantalizing prospect. He could no longer aspire to high office himself, but if his daughter were to marry one of the future leaders of the clan, the offspring of that union would have access to high positions.⁵⁰ If they were girls they might become imperial consorts, and if they were boys, they might even rise to minister of the left or right, regent, or chancellor. However, Kaneie was the third son, so in order to assume leadership of the Fujiwara clan, he would have to outlast his elder brothers. In 954 when he made the proposal, he was twenty-six and still only captain of the Right Guards, not an extremely distinguished position. Nonetheless, he had potential and influence. It is certainly more than coincidence that the author's father receives his first lucrative post as a provincial governor within the first year of the marriage.

49. *Ibid.*, 89.

50. *Ibid.*

When Kaneie married the author, he already had one wife, Tokihime, whose name we know because her daughters eventually bore emperors. At the time of Kaneie's proposal to the author, he only had one son with Tokihime. Tokihime came from the same provincial governor's class as the author so they were roughly equal in rank to begin with. Tokihime went on, however, to bear Kaneie three sons and two daughters, thus becoming indisputably his principal wife. Kaneie went on to collect and discard more wives. In the course of the diary, only a year after his marriage to the author, he takes up with a woman known as the Machi Alley woman. Then, in 970 he begins an affair with one of his late uncle's handmaidens, Ōmi. We learn later in the diary that he had also had an affair during the years in between with the daughter of a former high official, Minamoto Kanetada. It is the child of this union that the author eventually adopts when the girl is already twelve or thirteen years old. From historical records, we know that he continued to marry and have affairs right up until his death. He may be regarded as following in his father's footsteps in this respect since his father, Morosuke, had nineteen children by several different wives.

Kaneie did live up to his political potential assuming both the posts of regent and chancellor toward the end of his life. However, that was some time after relations between him and the author had ended. Moreover, the fruits of Kaneie's political success were mainly enjoyed by his three sons by Tokihime. In fact, his third son, Michinaga, became the greatest Fujiwara hegemon of them all.

Of course, we only get to see Kaneie through the author's eyes in the diary. At one point in the early period of their marriage, he responds to a long poem from his wife with one of his own (cf. pp. 95-99). It is the most sustained statement from him in the work. He was an able poet and certainly a lot of the author's attraction for him must have been her skill at poetry. He also appears as something of a wit. His reaction to the author's expression of chagrin is often to try and cajole her out of her temper with jokes. Failing that he ignores her moods apparently in the hopes they will go away. Either way he had difficulty just listening to her. Nonetheless, he seems to have been deeply attached to Michitsuna's Mother. Since she had neither the wealth, social standing, nor significant number of children that would have made it a difficult relationship to sever, it can only have been a profound affection that kept him in the marriage for sixteen years.

Other Wives and Affairs Noted in the Diary

Of her husband's other wives, Tokihime is the only one with whom the author herself had any continuous relationship. When the author first

records sending a poem to Tokihime commiserating over the infidelity of their mutual husband, she prefaces it with the remark that she had already exchanged correspondence with the woman before. It appears that the author was always the one to initiate the communication. Tokihime's responses seem very guarded. After all, from Tokihime's position, the author must have been seen as a great threat. The two women were evenly matched in social status, and we know from contemporary records that the author had a reputation for being both a great beauty and a skilled poet. Tokihime likely regarded the author as the bane of her existence. This finds overt expression in the poetry exchange between the two women at the Kamo Festival after some ten years of the author's marriage, where in a witty way, Tokihime accuses the author of cruelty (cf. p. 129). In the end, however, Tokihime's fertile womb won the competition between the two wives. With five children, her position became unassailable.

Of the other wives, little else is known about them beyond what the diary tells us. The Machi Alley woman, who gets her name from her place of residence, is reported to have been the unrecognized daughter of an unrecognized son of a prince. This constituted two strikes of "illegitimacy" against her, yet she was descended from royalty and still apparently possessed a residence of her own, even if not in the fashionable part of town. Why this woman, who suffers in the end such an unfortunate fate, should occasion such a consuming hatred in the author, when other affairs bothered her so much less, is an interesting question. Two factors are the author's immaturity and the timing of the affair; it came to light immediately following the birth of the author's child, when she was no doubt in an emotionally vulnerable state. Shinozuka has suggested that the author's intense hatred of the Machi Alley woman was a case of "transference" of the anger she could not express against her husband.⁵¹ Of course, the "reason" for her emotion is ultimately unknowable.

However, the contrast in her response to her husband's affair with Minamoto Kanetada's daughter is intriguing. That affair would have occurred only about four years after the affair with the Machi Alley woman, but from the way the author recalls it, it seems as though the liaison did not upset her at all. It could have been that since the woman was older, the author did not consider her a threat right from the beginning. Whatever the circumstances, and while her passionate jealousy against the Machi Alley woman creates an unforgettable impression, the difference in her reaction to the two women suggests that it would be one-sided to see the author only as a hysterically jealous woman.

51. Shinozuka, *Kagerō nikki no kokoro to byōgen*, 69.

Minamoto Kanetada's daughter is an example of an unmarried aristocratic Heian woman. There were apparently quite a large number of women in court society who were unable to marry.⁵² Since women were expected to stay within the parent's home, there was no overwhelming economic need to marry. To remain single was sometimes preferable to marrying below one's social status. This may have been the case with Kanetada's daughter. She was of high birth but her family's fortunes were declining. After her father died, she lost her protection and became vulnerable to seduction by someone like Kaneie.

The last liaison of Kaneie to make its way into the diary was his marriage to the woman known as Ōmi, after her father, Fujiwara Kuniaki, who was provincial governor of Ōmi. She was of the same general social position as Michitsuna's Mother. However, she had been put into service as a personal attendant to Kaneie's uncle, Saneyori, when Saneyori was seventy years old. As Shinozuka notes, "She may perhaps be regarded as a sacrifice to the old man's lust."⁵³ Kaneie began his affair with her after Saneyori's death, and a couple of years later she bore him a daughter. That daughter Suishi eventually became principal handmaid for the crown prince and shared his bed. *Eiga monogatari* records that "Thanks to this daughter, the Lady of the Wing Chamber [Ōmi] who had had something of a reputation for loose behavior, had now become a personage of importance. It only went to show, people said, what a child could do for one."⁵⁴ *Eiga monogatari* goes on to talk about the career of Ōmi's second daughter, who was not by Kaneie, but by his son, Michitaka. One wonders if this was *Eiga monogatari*'s subtle way of saying that Ōmi's reputation for loose behavior was not unwarranted.

Children

As mentioned before, the author had only one son, Michitsuna. There are only fleeting episodes about him as a child in the diary, undoubtedly because his actual rearing would have been the responsibility of his nurse. There is the time when, at about the age of eleven, he gets caught in the middle of a quarrel between his parents (cf. p. 153). There is also the time when he frees his hunting hawks, to show his determination to become a monk if his mother is to become a nun (cf. p. 205). A mere two years later he is identifying more with his father than his mother (cf. p. 235). Then

52. Fukuto Sanae, *Heian chō no baba to ko: kizoku to abomin no bazoku seikatsusbi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1991), 37.

53. Shinozuka Sumiko, "Kagerō nikki nōto: atana no nai tegami," *Kaisei* 73 (December 1989): 47.

54. McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 136-37.

there are his love affairs, which occupy a large portion of the last part of the diary. Michitsuna may not have had as illustrious a career as his half-brothers by Tokihime, but it was not inconsiderable. He never had to serve as a provincial governor, and his highest post, that of major counselor, was a respected position.

The daughter the author adopts in book three remains a shadowy figure. She was an unrecognized daughter of Kaneie by Minamoto Kane-tada's daughter. As Kaneie is reported to have told the author, "A girl was born at that place I used to visit. She says it is mine. It may well be," indicating some uncertainty on his part about the girl's parentage (cf. pp. 287-91). She only comes into the diary on the day of her arrival at the author's house, where she meets her whole new family, including the father she has never seen. One wonders what the girl of twelve must have felt in such a strange situation. Afterward we see her in the diary only as a passive recipient of instruction in poetry and calligraphy, and as a source of worry for the author when one of Kaneie's younger brothers comes courting for the daughter's hand too soon. The author in the end tells us very little about her relationship with the girl, but some commentators have suggested that the author's reason for writing the diary at all was for the benefit of this adopted daughter.⁵⁵ After a promising beginning, Kaneie does not in the end take the same interest in this daughter as he does in his daughters by Tokihime or even the daughter by Ōmi. It is conjectured that this daughter ended up serving at court as a lady-in-waiting to Kaneie's second daughter, Senshi, when she became empress.⁵⁶

Friends

Other people of importance in the author's circle were female friends. Although she does not name most of them, there is quite a number. She goes on several excursions and pilgrimages with unnamed female friends. When she secludes herself during her retreat, she is visited by a woman who comes to scold her and ends up in tears with her. She carries on a correspondence with many friends. Her long poem for the wife of Minamoto Takaakira and subsequent correspondence with her is some of the most touching writing in the work. However, it is her friendship with Kaneie's sister, Tōshi, or Lady Jōganden as she is referred to most often in the diary, that is one of the highlights in her life. She first has the occasion to get to know Tōshi when they are temporarily sharing one of Kaneie's houses (cf. p. 147). Friendship with Tōshi was as close as the author ever got to the glamour of the court. Tōshi had been married to an imperial

55. Kakimoto Tsutomu, *Kagerō nikki zenzūshūban* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1966), 19.
56. *Zenshū*, 92.

prince who died young. Then she was involved in an affair with the emperor Murakami. Emperor Murakami's principal consort was Tōshi's and Kaneie's elder sister, Anshi. Tōshi was in the habit of visiting her elder sister at court, and it was during one of those visits that the emperor became enamored of her. Anshi turned a blind eye to a couple of meetings but then asserted her authority and ended the affair. *Eiga monogatari*, from which the above account is paraphrased, says in summation, "Tōshi was sweet and fashionable—and probably something of a flirt, for otherwise such a thing would have been unlikely to happen."⁵⁷ When Anshi died, however, Emperor Murakami quickly summoned Tōshi to his side. They did not have long together, because a mere three years later, Murakami died. It is shortly after Murakami's death that Tōshi comes to share the same house with the author. They form a friendship that lasts throughout the period recorded by the diary.

Public Reputation of Michitsuna's Mother

We will conclude this section with a few remarks about the author's public reputation. Given that she was a woman at home without a public persona as such, she is mentioned surprisingly often in the historical record. In the *Sonpi bunmyaku*, she is noted as one of the most famous "beauties of the era."⁵⁸ Moreover, her skill as a poet and authorship of the *Kagerō Diary* are noted in *Ōkagami*. The entry is ostensibly about Michitsuna but ends up talking more about his mother:

His mother, an accomplished poet, set down an account of the things that happened while Kaneie was visiting her, together with some poems from the same period. She named the work *Gossamer Journal* [*Kagerō Diary*], and allowed it to be made public.⁵⁹

This nearly contemporary account gives us some idea of her reputation as a poet and also indicates that the diary was in circulation soon after its composition. A piece of internal evidence in the diary regarding the recognition of the author as a poet is the invitation to compose poems for the congratulatory screen for the fiftieth birthday of her husband's uncle, Moromasa (cf. pp. 187-89). Since Moromasa was a powerful politician, only first rank poets would have been asked to contribute poems for the final selection. Furthermore, the poetry collection at the end of the volume contains a number of poems submitted for poetry contests, again evidence

57. McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 81.
58. Oka, *Michitsuna* 60, 12.
59. Helen McCullough, *Ōkagami*, 166.

of her activity as a professional poet. Finally, a number of her poems were included in imperial poetry anthologies for the next two hundred years.⁶⁰ The epitome of her recognition as a poet came with the inclusion of one of her poems (cf. p. 71) in the *Hyakunin Isshu*, "One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each," compiled in the early thirteenth century by the great arbiter of poetic taste, Fujiwara Teika.⁶¹ The next section will look in more detail at the artistry of both her poetry and prose.

THE ARTISTRY OF THE TEXT

It was the sheer beauty of the text that first inspired me to translate the *Kagerō Diary*. That beauty is hard to convey in English translation not only because the language of this poetry is linguistically so different from English, but also because the whole background of the literary tradition that gives the language full meaning is missing for English readers. This section will attempt to convey the literary background and some of the specificity of the language of the text.

Balance between Poetry and Prose in the Text

In the previous section, a passage from the historical document *Ōkagami* was cited as evidence of the author's reputation as a poet among her contemporaries. I would like to revisit that citation with a more literal translation:

As for his mother, since she was extremely skillful as a poet, she brought together and wrote down the poems and the events of the period when his lordship [Kaneie] was visiting her, calling it the *Kagerō Diary* and letting it be spread about in the world.⁶²

This indicates that so far as her contemporaries were concerned, there was something akin to a causal relationship between her being a poet and composing this work. It was not only that being a poet meant being skillful at writing; it may also have meant that one of her intentions was to create a poetry anthology. Poetry was the dominant literary form of the

60. For a good summary in English of the recognition of Michitsuna's Mother as a *waka* poet through the inclusion of her poems in public and private anthologies, poetry contests, and so on, see Edith Sara, *Fictions of Femininity: Literary Inventions of Gender in Japanese Court Women's Memoirs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

61. Ariyoshi Tamotsu, *Hyakunin Isshu zenyaku-chū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983), and Joshua Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart: The One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each Collection, Its Commentaries and Pictures* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

62. Tachibana Kenji, *Ōkagami/Ryōjin bisshō*, in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 20 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1974), 259-60.

period and there was hardly any writing in Japanese that did not contain poetry. There was a range of texts that varied with respect to the degree of importance poetry had in them. These texts varied from, for example, *The Tales of Ise*,⁶³ where the poetry is primary and the prose essentially provides context for the poetry, to *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*,⁶⁴ where the storytelling of the prose is paramount and the poetry secondary. If a scale were drawn with the above two texts as the opposite poles, the *Kagerō Diary* would sit right in the middle. Particularly in the first part of the work, it is more like *The Tales of Ise*, where the main role of the prose is to provide context for the poetry. However, even by the latter part of book one, particularly in the author's description of her pilgrimage to Hase, the prose of the text comes into its own.

The Poetry and Its Literary Context

As mentioned above, Michitsuna's Mother was recognized as a skilled poet. To be skillful at poetry in this age meant to channel one's inspiration through the conduit of the poetic tradition already established by the *Kokin-shū* poetry anthology. *Kokinshū* was completed around A.D. 905. It was the first anthology of Japanese poetry to be sponsored by the emperor, signaling the recognition of Japanese poetry as a serious enterprise (previously, imperially sponsored anthologies had been limited to poetry in Chinese), and it was the first major text of the literary tradition to be written in the phonetic script, hiragana. The Japanese preface (it had a Chinese preface as well, to confer the necessary air of seriousness) broke ground as the first attempt to write discursively in the native language. This preface made a declaration about the essential nature of Japanese poetry that was to determine the course of that poetic tradition for the next six hundred years:

Japanese poetry, with the human heart for a seed, grows into the countless leaves of words. Since for people in the world, there is such a lushness of things, in response to seeing things, hearing things, we are moved to express what we feel in our hearts. Hearing the warbler in the blossoms or the voice of frogs living in water, what living thing is not moved to song [poetry]. It is poetry that without using force moves heaven and earth, causes tender feelings in invisible spirits and demons, softens the relations between men and women, and consoles the fierce hearts of warriors.⁶⁵

63. Helen McCullough, *Tales of Ise*.

64. Donald Keene, "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter."

65. Okumura Tsuneya, *Kokin waka shū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1978), 11.

Thus, the preface's author, Ki no Tsurayuki, stakes out the territory for Japanese poetry squarely in the domain of the expression of feeling. The characteristics of the poems compiled in *Kokinshū* define the conventions of Japanese poetry from that point forward. What are those conventions?

First, the preferred form for Japanese poetry becomes the thirty-one syllable *tanka*, or "short poem," another name for which is simply *waka*, "Japanese poem."⁶⁶ The thirty-one syllables are divided into five units called *ku* in the scheme of 5/7/5/7/7, the numbers standing for the number of syllables. *Ku* does not mean "line" exactly, although in the format the poems will be presented here, each *ku* will be the equivalent of a line. In Japanese manuscripts of the period, *waka* are usually written in one or two lines, and there has been much debate in recent years as to whether the rendering of *waka* into five lines in English is a distortion.⁶⁷ However, even if, orthographically in Japanese, *waka* are written in one or two lines, whenever *waka* are recited aloud, the *ku* breaks are registered distinctly in the rhythm. I would suggest that one of the ways one can give a sense of those rhythm breaks in English translation is with line breaks, so the translations presented in this volume will follow what has become conventional practice in English to render *waka* in five lines.

There is a perhaps a link between the choice of a brief form for the standard form of poetry, and the focus of poetry upon lyric expression. It is characteristic of feelings that they do not persist. They shift and change. To capture feeling is to create a lyric moment. Long poems must include something other than expression of feeling; the most common move is to narrative, but the *waka* being a short form could concentrate on the lyric moment. Actually Ishikawa Takuboku, a poet of this form in the twentieth century, said it eloquently:

People say the *tanka* form is inconvenient because it's so short. I think its shortness is precisely what makes it convenient. . . . We are constantly being subjected to so many sensations, coming from both inside and outside ourselves, that we forget them soon after they occur, or even if we remember them for a little while, we end up by never once in our whole lifetimes ever expressing them because there is not enough content to sustain

66. *Tanka* means literally "short poem" and *waka* means "Japanese poem." Although they refer to the same form of poetry, the usage is a little different. *Waka* is used more often in the context of classical poetry up to nineteenth century, while *tanka* is generally used in the context of modern Japanese poetry since the *tanka* form is still being written by some modern poets.

67. The translator Hiroaki Sato is the most vigorous exponent of *waka* as a "single line" poem. For a summary of his views on this issue, see the introduction to his translation of *Siring of Beads: Complete Poems of Princess Sibiishi* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 30.

the thought. . . . Although a sensation may last only a second, it is a second that will never return again. I refuse to let such moments slip by.⁶⁸

The choice of a brief form for the norm in poetry had other ramifications for the role of poetry in social interaction. A short form lends itself to being included in letters and facilitates impromptu composition. In conjunction with having fixed and easily understood conventions, the brevity of *waka* helped keep poetry within everyone's reach. It may not be easy to write a superb *waka*, but it is not difficult to write one that merely follows the conventions and fits the form of thirty-one syllables.

Kokinshū also determined that the main topics for Japanese poetry would be nature and love. Of the twenty books of *Kokinshū*, six are devoted exclusively to poems of the four seasons (thus subjects from nature) and five to love. Moreover, the topics of the other books, such as grief, parting, and travel, overlap with nature and/or love. As the reader will note in the *Kagerō Diary*, the language of poems of friendship is often indistinguishable from that of love poems. Although it was possible to write a love poem without natural imagery, in actual practice, they were often intertwined. Thus, nature and love constitute the essential domain of Japanese poetry.

The predilection for expressing feeling through conventional imagery of the four seasons had an important effect. It linked interior emotion to the exterior world. For example, if one wanted to write a poem to express a feeling and it was the fifth month, there was a set of natural imagery to choose from, already determined by tradition: inises, *umobana* (a kind of shrub with white blossoms), the cuckoo, summer rains. It was poetically unthinkable to use a natural image from a season other than the season one was in, even in a metaphorical way, although some natural imagery, particularly that of the sea, was not linked to any particular season and was therefore potentially available for any poem. Conventional and limiting as such a poetic practice may seem, it meant that when you wanted to express a feeling inside, you first looked outside (mentally or actually) for what flora or fauna of the season could project that feeling. An example of this in the diary is when Michitsuna's Mother and Kaneie have become physically intimate again after an estrangement. The narrative prose of the section sets the scene thus: "While still lying down [an oblique reference to their having made love], and gazing at the flowers in rank, multicolored profusion, we said the following" (cf. pp. 83-85). From

68. As cited in Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 43-44.

the scene before them, they both choose images of flowers, dew, and autumn for a poetic exchange in which they express complex emotions of erotic closeness and lingering resentment. In this case, they literally look outside to find natural images that can mirror their feelings. This practice, although guided by convention, actually grounds a poem in the here and now of the moment of composition, collapsing the line between interior and exterior worlds.

The *Kokinshū* not only established the topics that would remain the domain of Japanese *waka* poetry but it also to a great extent fixed the vocabulary to be used in poetry.⁶⁹ It has already been noted in the historical introduction how a Fujiwara patriarch enjoined his daughter to learn all of the poems of the *Kokinshū* by heart.⁷⁰ This was how the word trope and "rules" were learned. The rules were not abstracted from the poems but rather embodied in them. Thus, the *Kokinshū* was like a code book for Heian aristocrats. Given this, it will be no surprise to the reader that poetic allusion during the Heian period was most often to the poems of the *Kokinshū*, and in this respect the poems of Michitsuna's Mother are no exception.⁷¹

With the *Kokinshū* and the poetry it shaped for the next thousand years, we have a lyric poetry dedicated to the expression of personal emotion that is confined within very narrow conventions, thus assuring a communal unity to expression. The *waka* form embodies a code of communication that paradoxically expresses the individual person while at the same time affirming a communal mind. Michitsuna's Mother did not resist her poetic tradition. The artistry of her poetry is the artistry of her poetic tradition. Using examples from the *Kagerō Diary*, some of the technical aspects of the Heian poetic tradition will now be explicated. This section will also give the reader some insight into the problems and process of translation with regard to poetry in the text.

69. Successive imperially sponsored anthologies of poetry did add somewhat to the range of topics and approved vocabulary. The *Gosenshū*, which was completed around 958 and was therefore the only other imperial anthology to be known by the *Kagerō Diary* author, was noted for its use of use of vocabulary outside of that of the *Kokinshū*. However, the *Gosenshū* always suffered from unfavorable comparison with the *Kokinshū* and never exerted the same degree of influence. Donald Keene, *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 280-81.

70. Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince*, 221.

71. Michitsuna's Mother does allude to poems of her contemporaries upon occasion. The next most frequently cited and alluded to poetry collection in the *Kagerō Diary* is the *Kokin rokujū*, "Ancient and Modern Poems in Six Notebooks," an "unofficial" anthology that was not produced under official sponsorship but seemed to evolve as a reference handbook among poets of the Heian period.

Kakokotoba: Pivot Word/Pun

One of the most salient techniques of Heian poetry is the use of a type of pun called *kakokotoba*, "pivot word," because it pivots between two meanings. The English word "pun" seems inadequate to describe the complex phenomenon of *kakokotoba*, but I will use it because it is convenient and short. A rough approximation of how the technique of *kakokotoba* might work in English would be this:

He *leaves*
fall yellow on the path
she *dies*
the color of sorrow
into her *morning* gown.

Words with the same sound but different meanings are placed so that their doubled meaning can function as a juncture between two syntactic structures. In fact, Edwin Cranston, in his recently published anthology of *waka* poetry, has used the translation "juncture" for *kakokotoba*.⁷² Here is an example of *kakokotoba* usage from the *Kagerō Diary*. The following poem was addressed to Tokihime, the first wife of the *Kagerō Diary* author's husband. The year before, Kaneie had taken up with a woman known in the diary as the Machi Alley woman. Michitsuna's Mother sent this poem to Tokihime to commiserate with her about Kaneie's absence from both their beds (cf. p. 75):

soko ni sahe Even from your pond's depths,
karu to ifu naru they say it has been reaped,
makomo gusa the wild rice,
ikanaru sawa ni in what marsh now does it put
ne wo todamuramu down its roots and stay to sleep?

There are three *kakokotoba* in this poem. *Soko* in the first line means both "your place" and "bottom," as of pond. *Karu* means, "to be separated from" and "to reap," while *ne* means "root" and "sleep." The poem was written in the fifth month, which was when the stalks of *makomo*, a kind of wild rice, were harvested for making mats and pillows. The wild rice provides the unifying imagery for the poem with pond/marsh, reap, and roots. That the wild rice stalks were associated with the manufacture of bedding is also particularly appropriate. There is irony in the pun on "reap" and "to be separated from," since the Machi Alley woman's "harvest" is their loss. There even seems to be something a little naughty about the

72. Edwin A. Cranston, trans., *A Waka Anthology: Volume One: The Gem-Glistening Cup* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), xxiv.

pun available in "root" and "sleep." The imagery and puns together make this a rich and complex communication.

In the English translation, the puns have become metaphors, so it takes an effort of imagination to realize that in the original *soko ni sabe* conveys "simultaneously," "even at your place" and "even at the bottom [of the pond]." The same is true for the other two *kakekotoba*; it is like hearing two tracks of separate yet linked meaning. The density of meaning and imagery it makes possible is astonishing. Only rarely is it possible to create an analogous effect in English. However, I note the puns that occur in the poems so that the reader can be aware of their presence.

Makura Kotoba: *Pillow Words*

Perhaps one of the hardest techniques of Heian poetic diction for a Western audience to appreciate is the *makura kotoba* or "pillow word." It is often explained as analogous to the "fixed epithet" which occurs in Greek epic poetry, but the pillow word is more complex in its operation. The most intriguing thing about pillow words is that they are not definite in meaning. This is because the pillow words often come from ancient poetry and their etymological origins are obscure. Take the phrase, *sasagani no*, "of the *sasagani*," which is a pillow word for spider. *Sasagani* is a name for spider which perhaps started from a metaphor, since the *gani* part of *sasagani* may have come from *kani*, the word for crab. More important than the precise meaning of the term, however, is the incantatory ring it brings to the poem; it has the feeling of antiquity about it and signals that spider imagery is coming. Many pillow words are place names. Take for example this poem, composed by one of Kaneie's attendants for Michitsuna's Mother's serving ladies as part of the New Year's celebrations (cf. p. 277):

shimotsuke ya	Shimotsuke, hey!
woke no futara wo	This lid of a tub, we see
adjikinaku	unfortunately
kage no ukabanu	is a mirror whereon
kagami to zo miru	your reflections do not float.

He is asking for the ladies to let themselves be seen. What does "Shimotsuke, hey!" have to do with the poem? Shimotsuke is a place-name in the area of Japan known today as Nikkō. There are two other places in the same district with the names Ooke and Futara. Ooke is homophonous for *oke*, "tub," and Futara with *futara*, "lid," so Shimotsuke became a pillow word for tubs and lids. It is not linear thinking that gives rise to pillow words but free association and usage in ancient poetry. For the most part, the

pillow words have not been rendered in the present translation because they present even more difficulty than the pivot words, but again I have pointed them out in the notes to at least remind the reader that the translations are not transparent.

Enjo: *Verbal Association*

Enjo, literally "connected language," or as Earl Miner has translated it, "verbal association,"⁷³ represents another way that an associative mode of thinking became codified into a poetic technique. It is the constructing of a poem or part of a poem⁷⁴ around a cluster of words connected to a central image or motif. For example, in the poem above that has wild rice as a core image, "pond," "reap," and "root" are all *enjo*-associated with wild rice. These three words are all simultaneously used as *kakekotoba*, which indicates how interwoven all the poetic techniques described here can be in usage. One of the places in the diary where the use of *enjo* is conspicuous because it extends over six poems, is the poetic exchange between Kaneie and Prince Noriaki in book one (cf. pp. 101-3). The prince initiates the exchange with a poem in which the pun available on *tsuba*, "spool," in the word *tsukasa*, "court office," launches a play on textile-related vocabulary: "spool," "thread," "cut/break ties," "wind," "spin," *natsubiki* (a special kind of summer-spun thread for linen), skeins, and so on. As in this example, *enjo* often creates a sense of unity within a poem and between poems. The diary includes two long poems, *chōka*, one by Michitsuna's Mother (cf. pp. 89-93) and one by Kaneie (cf. pp. 95-97). In these long poems, the reader will notice that extended runs of associated vocabulary provide continuity in an otherwise meandering form. I have not noted the presence of *enjo* specifically in the commentary to the translation largely because of the difficulty of separating it out from the use of puns, but wherever there is mention of associative language, the reader may assume that *enjo* is at play.

Conclusion to the Waka Section

Waka poems are short but dense, not with meaning so much as with resonance; they constantly call up a shared and minutely appreciated poetic tradition. They play with language as though the words were threads in a borderless tapestry, and since the poems live in exchange, each poem

73. Earl Miner, Hiroko Odagiri, and Robert E. Morrell, *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 273.

74. This discussion is limited to poetry, but *enjo* can also be used in prose, particularly in later Japanese literature.

is always an invitation for a reciprocal creation. Michitsuna's Mother was not an original poet in her tradition; (it must be remembered that it was a tradition where originality was not the object of the game), yet she was adept at speaking her own meaning through the forms of the tradition. When we look at her prose, however, it is her originality that demands attention.

Characteristics of Michitsuna's Mother's Prose Style

It is important to stress how new Japanese prose was in Michitsuna's Mother's age. It was mentioned before that the preface of the *Kokinshū* was the first attempt to write discursively in the Japanese language. Prior to that, and for the most part, even after that, all expository writing was done in Chinese. Then in 935, the author of the *Kokinshū* preface, Ki no Tsurayuki, wrote an account of a trip from Shikoku back to the capital, the *Tosa nikki* or *Tosa Diary*.⁷⁵ As mentioned at the beginning of the introduction, he used a woman's persona to write the diary, so much had writing of the vernacular language in phonetic script come to be associated with women. There were also the *monogatari* or "tales," presumably written by men for a largely female readership. At any rate, given that the *Kagerō Diary* was composed around 970, the Japanese prose tradition was only about sixty-five years old. Poetry was older because it had been written down in the eighth century and preserved since then as an oral tradition as well.

In that sense, the *Kokinshū* was the culmination of an already lengthy tradition. Prose, on the other hand, was very new and was appropriated by women who, being at the margins, had the freedom of irrelevance. It is hard to see this "irrelevance" now since for the last two hundred and fifty years the prose works of the Heian women writers have been declared masterpieces and the works that defined the age. Akiyama Ken has put this in perspective when he said that although the Heian period is now known as the age of *monogatari*, people of the Heian period would have been very surprised to hear it. To them the tales and prose works in general were just the diversions of women.⁷⁶ Perhaps it was both the newness and marginality of the prose medium that allowed it to be so malleable in the hands of Michitsuna's Mother.

Not all facets of interest in Michitsuna's Mother's prose are original with her; some are aspects of classical Japanese in general. In the next

section, I will first deal with general features of classical Japanese prose and then delineate Michitsuna's Mother's original contribution to the medium.

Avoidance of Pronouns

One feature of classical Japanese prose that causes headaches for modern readers and translators is the avoidance of pronouns and the general dropping of subjects. About ninety percent of the time that the reader sees an "I" in this translation of the *Kagerō Diary*, it was not there in the original. While a pronoun for "I," *ware*, did exist in classical Japanese, its actual usage was severely limited. On the other hand, gender-specific third-person pronouns did not even exist in classical Japanese. There was the word, *karu*, which in the modern language is used as the equivalent of "he," but in the Heian period, it meant only "that person"; in other words, it was the same as "*ano hito*." The unisex *bito* or "person" is used more frequently than *karu*, but neither of them are used often. Thus, in the numerous instances in the diary where the translation says of the author's husband that "he appeared," in the original it is simply *mietari*, "appeared." The reader is simply to understand "who" appeared, yet, paradoxically, the absence of explicit reference to her husband either with a pronoun or by use of his name seems to reaffirm his omnipresence in her consciousness.⁷⁷ However, as one might surmise, this very elliptical way of referring to subjects of actions can result in a troublesome ambiguity. The ellipsis of subject is general to classical Japanese, but at least in Heian fiction, the reader is aided in understanding who did or said what to whom by the fact that the narrating voice assumes a position within the social hierarchy and accordingly uses honorific forms of address and verb endings. For example, in *The Tale of Genji*, when Genji does something, the action verb is always given an honorific ending, so it is clear that he is the subject. Since the narrating voice in the *Kagerō Diary* is essentially the author talking to herself, there is no use of honorifics except in the quoted speech of others. This sometimes makes it difficult to know who the subject of a verb is. For example, in book three of the diary, in the section where Michitsuna's Mother unites her newly adopted daughter with the daughter's actual father, the author's husband, Kaneie, there is a line translated in the present work as, "*I couldn't help crying, bringing my sleeve to my eyes many times. He said, 'Well, I never . . .'*" (cf. p. 295), but in the original there is no subject specified for "couldn't help crying" or for "said," and

75. The "Tosa Diary" in Miner, *Japanese Poetic Diaries*.
76. Akiyama, *Ōchō joryū bungaku no sekai*, 209.

77. For a more detailed treatment of this issue, see Sonja Arntzen, "Translating Difference: a New Translation for the *Kagerō Diary*," *Japan Foundation Newsletter* (December 1993).

while the context makes it clear that the speaker of "Well, I never . . ." is Kaneie, commentators are divided down the middle as to whether the crying should be attributed to Michitsuna's Mother or Kaneie. Ultimately there is no way to know for sure. I have opted to follow the interpretation of the *Zenshū* commentators, because in places where expert opinion has been divided, unless I felt strongly otherwise, my practice has been to follow the *Zenshū* interpretation.

A similar problem comes up with the ungendered *bito* or "person." In book two, for example, when the author has retreated to a temple in Narutaki and Kaneie sends a member of his household office to scold the author into returning (cf. p. 241), there is no way to know whether that person was male or female, which is important in English where one must use either "he" or "she." My practice has been to make these ambiguous cases female because face-to-face conversations between men and women in this age were severely restricted.

There are other times when the author could be saying either "I" or "we." These are usually places where she describes a situation which involves her attendants. In an incident in book one, where she receives an order for sewing from Kaneie and in the end refuses to do it, the present translation says, ". . . and so it was decided; we sent the bundles back and as we suspected . . ." (cf. p. 81). This passage could just as easily be translated as "I sent the bundles back and as I suspected . . ." but from the context of the passage, since the attendants have been included in the decision-making, it seemed reasonable to make the action collective.

Over and above the difficulties occasioned by such ambiguities as described above, the ellipsis of the first-person subject makes a difference to the construction of "self" in the diary. The fact that the "I" is understood in classical Japanese is not the same as having the "I" explicitly and constantly stated. I would suggest that the necessity of having a definite subject for every grammatically correct utterance in English is part and parcel of Western culture's traditional belief in a unitary self and separate others acting independently in a world of objects. Perhaps there is more to the writing of the first person subject with a capital "I" in English than typological convention. Is it not consistent with a dominating first-person subject viewpoint in the language and a conception that all persons are metaphysically as well as grammatically separate and distinct from one another? In classical Japanese and particularly in the *Kagerō Diary*, the general absence of a first-person pronoun creates a much more diffuse sense of self. It is a self with soft edges that bleeds into the quotations of the voices of others and the citation of others' letters. And yet, even without the constant reiteration of "I," it is a text of such intense first-person sub-

jectivity.⁷⁸ This seems impossible to duplicate in English. I considered using small case "i" for awhile following the practice of some contemporary poetry and experimental fiction, but it seemed that such a strategy might end up drawing even more attention to the "I" than simply complying with convention. Instead I have opted to convey the sense of a diffuse self by keeping the interrupting voices of others intact in the text rather than resorting to paraphrase even where it would help smooth out a passage. In line with the same intention, I have also kept distinct through the use of italics the disrupting voice of the author's own consciousness, that is, her citation of bits of her own speech that she observes in her mind.

Tenseless Narrative

Another general feature of classical Japanese prose is what Richard Okada has referred to as "tenseless narrative":

. . . the tenseless narrative does not mean "present-tense" narrative. The narrating easily refers to prior moments, but they are always anchored to the spatiotemporal coordinates of the particular moment in question. What happened once has relevance not as an always already reified, abstractable past point in linear time, but as the narrating moment continually represents it in a delictically determinate now.⁷⁹

None of the suffixes from classical Japanese that are usually translated into English as past tenses, such as *nu*, *tsu*, and *tari*, are actually fixed past tenses. They all overlap with affirmation. Only the suffix *ki* is close to being a past tense, since it is used to denote actions in the past that one knows from direct personal experience. Given a grammatical description like this, one might assume that it would be the preferred ending in a text like the *Kagerō Diary*, which is the record of personal experience. Surprisingly, it hardly appears at all. Aside from the suffixes mentioned above, the most common perfective suffix is *keri*, a suffix that is used most often for narrated information that the speaker has learned

78. I am indebted to Lynn Miyake's "If 'I' were 'She' and 'She' were 'I': The Narration of the *Kagerō Nikki*," a conference paper at the 1993 Combined Western and Southwestern Conferences of the Association for Asian Studies, for insight into how pronoun reference creates such an intense first-person perspective. See also Watanabe Minoru's "Style and Point of View in the *Kagerō Nikki*," translated by Richard Bowring, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 10:2 (1984): 365-84, and the original article, "Tōjishateki hyōgen—*Kagerō Nikki*," in *Heian bunsōshi* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), 90-112.

79. H. Richard Okada, *Figures of Resistance: Language, Poetry, and Narrating in the Tale of Genji and Other Mid-Heian Texts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 179.

by hearsay. It is the use of this ending that gives the feeling of a tale to the *Kagerō Diary*. Another use of the *keri* suffix is for the narration of information about which the speaker experiences some sense of discovery or realization in the process of the narration. That is why *keri* is a common verb ending in the poetry of the period. Richard Okada quotes two Japanese grammarians who have attempted to explain the curious operation of *keri* by describing it in terms of bringing "the past into the present moment," or by saying that "when *keri* is used, the past is conceived of in some manner as existing at the present moment."⁸⁰ The editors of the Iwanami dictionary of classical Japanese, grappling with the same problem in description, have generalized the problem in these terms:

There is a big difference in the way modern Europeans and ancient Japanese people conceived of time. Europeans think of time as having an objective existence and linear continuity, and they see it as something that can be divided up, so they have as a foundation the distinctions between past, present, and future. However, for the ancient Japanese, time was not an objective linear continuity. Rather, in an extremely subjective way, the future was the speaker's vague supposition or conjecture and the past was the presence of the speaker's memory or the evocation of the speaker's memory.⁸¹

It is an intriguing notion to narrate the past in such a way that it is recreated in the present. Just as with the construction of the self, tense in classical Japanese narrative is not connected to a world of hard and fast definitions. There is a shifting and conflation of tense just as there was a conflation of the self and other voices.

A typical passage in the *Kagerō Diary* may begin with a reference to a season or a date that will place the context of the narration in the past. The passage will then often move to a "present tense" mode of narration. Actually, since the sentences are typically long and flowing, tense is suspended for the space of the sentence and the sentence is only given a tense marking at the end which will often be one of the three perfective tenses mentioned above, or *keri*, which as described above defies summation as simply a perfective ending.

The reading experience created by this is one of an unfolding into a "present" of events one knows are in the past.⁸² There are other passages where it seems that the narration of the past is more firmly in the past but

80. *Ibid.*, 38.

81. Ono Susumu et al. *Iwanami kogo jiten* (Iwanami Press, 1974), 1439-40.

82. This description of the reading experience is, of course, based on my own experience. The reading experience of Heian readers is unknowable.

never so firmly as the equivalent in English. This is why the translation displays a much freer mixing of past and present tenses than is normally considered proper in English. By this means, I have hoped to convey what I perceive as a shifting temporal flow in the original.

Original Aspects of the Kagerō Diary Prose Style

Up to this point, I have been talking of those features of the *Kagerō Diary* prose style that it shares with classical Japanese in general. However, there are some fascinating ways in which the *Kagerō Diary* prose style is original. One is its long, undulating sentences. The sentences follow the flow of the author's mind creating something analogous to a "stream of consciousness" effect. Let us look at the following example from book two taken from the section where the author has just arrived at the temple that is the site of her retreat (cf. p. 233):

The mountain path was not anything particular to speak about—*ab—I can only think of the times in the past when just the two of us traveled this road together; there was that time when I was ill, we were here around three or four days; yes, it was around this time of the year; he didn't even go to serve at court; together we were hidden from the world; thinking about this and other things, I go along the long path, tears pouring down. I am accompanied by only three attendants.*

I get down first at the monastery's living quarters; when I look around, I see some peonies surrounded by a brushwood fence among some other luxuriantly growing plants whose name I know not; they are in such a pitiful state, their petals all fallen and scattered; the old poem, "flowers have only one season," comes to mind and repeating it to myself, I become very sad.

This passage has only three sentences, two long ones and one short one as a sort of segue. The paragraphing in the translation is in accordance with the *Zenshū* text, but there would have been no paragraph separations in the original text. If we focus on the two long sentences, we see that the first one follows the pattern of association in memory. Riding on the path to the temple reminds her of the times when she had traveled on the same path with her husband, which in turn reminds her in detail of the sweet intimacy of the time they spent together there. She virtually relives the past in the form of an inner monologue, but it occasions tears because the past stands in stark contrast to the present where not only is she by herself but she has run away to perhaps cut off relations with her husband forever by becoming a nun. Note that the author does not spell out the causal relationship between the content of her inner monologue and her

tears, but rather appears simply to give us her thoughts and emotional responses as they occur. The short sentence where she remarks about the smallness of her escort, signals the return of her attention from past reminiscence to the present moment and the wretchedness of her situation.

In the second long sentence, the author surveys the scene before her, and focuses on the bedraggled peonies which become a mirror for herself. Her sense of being a flower past its prime is crystallized in her remembering a fragment of poem no. 1016 from the *Kokinshū*:

In the autumn fields
blooming so vigorously,
the Maiden Flowers,
such a struggle to be seen,
flowers too have only one season.

The sentence moves from establishing the context of place to an image to a fragment of poetry to an expression of feeling, thereby creating the illusion of capturing thoughts and sensation as they occur. This kind of sinuous sentence, propelled by mental association in a dance with memory, is characteristic of Michitsuna's Mother's prose style and makes it very different not only from Ki no Tsurayuki's style in the *Tosa Diary*, the only immediate antecedent for diary writing in Japanese, but also from prose style in the early *monogatari*.

The last sentence in the above example can also be used to illustrate another original characteristic of the *Kagerō Diary* prose style. This is the blurring of the distinction between poetry and prose. How does the author do this? She has the prose carry as much imagistic and subjective emotional content as poetry normally does. In the sentence about the peonies above, the juxtaposition of a natural image with a feeling is common to the operation of many *waka*. Furthermore, the embedding of a poetic fragment in the sentence moves the prose even closer to poetry. Readers of the later *Tale of Genji* will not be surprised at the blurring of boundaries between poetry and prose, for it is also a hallmark of the *Genji* author's prose, but it originates with the *Kagerō Diary*.

A final characteristic of the *Kagerō Diary* prose style that arrests the reader's attention as distinctive is something that I designate as a "cinematic" style of description. One visual image succeeding another creates a montage effect. Take for example, this passage from a description of her approach to a pilgrimage site (cf. pp. 157-59):

We left from there, and as we go along, even though the path is nothing to speak of, it still gives one the feeling of being deep in the mountains and the sound of the water is very affect-

ing. Those famed cedars are living, even now piercing the sky, all kinds of colors of tree leaves can be seen. From among many stones, the water gurgles forth. Seeing this scene struck by the light of the setting sun, tears pour forth endlessly. The path to here had not been so especially charming. There were as yet no red autumn leaves; the flowers were all gone; one could only see withered pampas grass. Yet, here, the feeling is special, when I look out, rolling up the outer blind, pushing aside the inner blind, the color of this well-worn robe is quite different. When I pull the train of lavender gauze around me, the ties cross over my lap, how well their color complements the burnt amber of this robe, how enchanting I find it all. The beggars with their pots and bowls set on the ground before them, how sad they seem. Feeling so close to the poor and lowly, entering the temple precincts is less uplifting than I expected.

The description above is visually rich and enlivened by the narrator's shifting gaze. Imagine the above scene rendered in film. A carriage moves along a path in a forest close to a stream. A tilt shot follows cedars up to the sky, then a cut is made to a pan sweeping the foliage. A cut is made to a close-up of the stream; the sound track magnifies the water gurgling. The camera cuts to a close-up of a woman's face weeping in the slanting rays of the sun behind the blinds of the carriage, then cuts to silvery pampas grass and back to a view from the inside of the carriage of hands rolling up and pushing aside blinds. The woman's hands bring lavender ties around and crisscross them over her lap; the shot is from the woman's point of view, and the camera dwells on the colored pattern of lavender over burnt amber, then cuts to crouched figures of beggars in the indigo twilight staring up at us because we, the viewers, see them through her eyes. The point is that her prose could be translated easily into film, because even though this was millennium before the invention of film, the structure of her prose description creates an analogous effect.

Translation's Tightrope

This preceding section has attempted to give some impression of the linguistic specificity of the original text. The reader will have noticed that while the translation has taken shape by trying to render the style of the original, it remains profoundly different. There is no such thing as a transparent translation. In preparing a translation that one hopes a large audience will read, one walks a tightrope between allowing one's reading of the original to shape the translation so radically that the style may appear alien and difficult, or making the translation conform so closely to stylistic norms of contemporary English that all difference is effaced. One negoti-

ates this tightrope perpetually and there will likely be many readers from whose viewpoint this translation will appear to have fallen off the rope in one direction or the other. Hopefully there will be other readers for whom the translation strikes the right balance. Balanced in the wind of change, I relinquish the struggle for the time being and offer the reader one of many possible versions of the *Kagerō Diary*.

The Kagerō Diary

Book One

Summary

Book one covers fourteen years in the author's married life, from the year 954 to the year 968. The author, Michitsuna's Mother, is a woman of the middle-ranking aristocracy. She is about nineteen when the proposal for marriage comes from Fujiwara Kaneie, one of her kinsmen from a distant and more powerful branch of the family. It is assumed the author began writing the diary around 971, many years after the events recorded in book one. The first indication that the diary was actually begun later is in the introductory paragraph, where she states that the events of years past are vague in her memory.

She starts the diary in the third person, giving it the feel of a fictional piece of writing. However, within one long sentence she moves to declare her purpose to write a sort of antiromance, the record of a real person's life, her own. The reader will see her struggle through book one as she alternately recaptures the moments in her marriage that accorded with the romantic ideal and laments the points at which the relationship fell short.

Running through the narration is her record of correspondence and the exchange of poetry that was an integral part of communication in the period. In fact, in many respects, book one is more like an anthology of poetry than a diary, at least in conventional Western terms. Her style of narration is elliptical and fragmentary. She is not interested in filling out the picture so that we get a clear sense of who all the actors are and what the chronology is. Her focus is rather on heightened moments of sensibility, which usually involve the composition of poetry.

there is one - She begins speaking of herself in the third person, which gives the beginning of her diary the feel of a *monogatari*, "tale."

old tales - Romantic tales perhaps like the *Tale of Lady Ochikubo*, a Cinderella story where a mistreated stepdaughter is rescued from her cruel situation by a handsome, high-ranking man.

places where I have just left it at that are indeed many - This phrase is vague in the original and has been subject to many varied interpretations ranging from "There are many things I have written that were best left unwritten" to "There are many descriptions where I've thought this will do." I have left it vague. A possible interpretation of "at that" is "as vague and fragmented as my memory."

"a tall tree among oak trees" - Conventional metaphorical expression for the position of captain of the Right Guards, which her husband-to-be, Kaneie, is known to have held at that time. From this, we also know the year is 954. He is twenty-six; she is about nineteen.

An ordinary person would have sent - Given that women (other than those serving at court) were hidden away behind ranks of relatives and servants and layers of walls and curtains (even their layers and layers of clothing seem emblematic of the barriers to intimacy), a Heian man wishing to initiate a relationship could either approach the woman through her male protectors, fathers, and brothers, as Kaneie does in this case, or try to reach her secretly through her personal female attendants and set up direct correspondence. Michitsuna's Mother, it seems, would have preferred the latter, which would have accorded more with the progress of a love affair in a romance.

my father - She uses an indirect expression, "the one who is recognized as my parent." She does this with all terms of family relation, but they are rendered more directly in this translation. Her father is of the Fujiwara clan too, a distant cousin to Kaneie. Her father's branch of the family had been relegated to the sidelines of the political world.

such a letter - A letter of proposal. An alternate interpretation of this passage is that she is surprised to see such bad handwriting because she had heard he had a fine hand, but then the mention of paper does not quite fit. It seems more likely that she is disappointed by the casualness in choice of paper and hand, that it does not seem like a serious letter of proposal. Again her expectations in this regard would have been shaped by romantic tales.

cuckoo bird - From this we know that the season of their first correspondence is early summer.

Thus the time has passed and there is one in the world who has lived such a vain existence, catching on to neither this nor that. As for her appearance, she can hardly be compared to others, and her intelligence—to say she has some is as good as saying she has none at all—so it is only natural that she has come to such a useless state she thinks again and again; it is just that in the course of living, lying down, getting up, dawn to dusk, when she looks at the odds and ends of the old tales—of which there are so many, they are just so much fantasy—that she thinks perhaps if she were to make a record of a life like her own, being really nobody, it might actually be novel, and could even serve to answer, should anyone ask, what is it like, the life of a woman married to a highly placed man, yet the events of the months and years gone by are vague; places where I have just left it at that are indeed many.

Well then, for this ultimately disappointing affair, there was, of course, the exchange of love letters; from about the time that he became "a tall tree among oak trees," it seems that he made his intentions known. An ordinary person would have sent a discreet letter using a serving maid or someone like that as a go-between to make his feelings known, but this man goes right to my father, half-joking, half-serious, hinting at the idea, and even though I told my father that it did not suit me at all, just as if he did not know, one day he sends a retainer riding on a horse to pound on our gate. Who was bringing whose messages, we had not a hint, so there is a big commotion, we were quite perplexed, and accepting the message brings on another commotion. When I look at it, the paper and so on are not what you would expect in such a letter; I had heard from of old that in such a case the hand would be perfect, but the writing in this is so bad that I feel it couldn't be that sort of letter; it is so very strange. The words were:

oto ni nomi	Only to listen
kikeba kanashi na	to your sound alone is sad,
hototogisu	cuckoo bird,
koto katarahamu to	would that I could speak with you,
omofu kokoro aru	this is what my heart longs for.

my old mother – She says “person of the older generation,” but “mother” is the generally agreed upon interpretation.

I have someone write – Revealing her own hand would be the first step to intimacy, so, adopting a posture of resistance, she delays his seeing her handwriting. Since it is not written in her own hand, he will even be uncertain as to whether it is her composition or not. Of course, the posture of resistance is conventionally required.

flutter a voice – Pun on two meanings of the same word *furu*, one meaning “to brandish, wave in front of one,” and the other, “to be shaky, have a quavering sound.”

soundless waterfall – There is an actual waterfall of this name in the Ohara district of Kyoto.

tracks . . . letters in the sand – This poem puns on the word *fumi*, which means both “footsteps, tracks of animals or birds” and “writing” in the sense of “letters, books, and writing in general.” It is a pun that occurs often in Heian poetry. There is also a pun here on *naki*, “not there,” which is embedded in the word *nagi-sa*, “shore.” Orthographically, *naki* and *nagi* were not distinguished in the Heian period.

waze – Metaphor for someone interfering with their correspondence, perhaps another suitor, which derives from the well-known and often quoted *Kokinshū* poem, no. 1093:

if ever I should
change my mind and banish you
from my heart then would
great ocean waves rise and cross
Suenomatsu Mountain

(Laurel Rasplica Rodd, *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984], 372)

It is impossible that the waves could rise and cross the mountain, so the *Kokinshū* poem may no longer be true. The majority of allusions throughout this text are to the *Kokinshū*, the first anthology of Japanese poetry compiled by imperial command. It was completed in 905, and by the time of this diary had become the model text for the composition of Japanese verse, which is why it is alluded to so often. The poem numbers given make it possible to find the poem in any edition of the *Kokinshū*, whether in Japanese or English translation. As above, I will generally use L. R. Rodd's translations, but where the translations are not noted as Rodd's, they are my own.

serious response – The word “serious,” *mama*, means “with serious intent.” In other words, this is a correspondence leading to marriage.

and that was all. When we all discuss it, “How about it? Does it require a reply?” my old mother says, “It does.” So feeling obliged, I have someone write:

katarahamu Toward this village
hito naki sato ni where there's no one to speak with,
hototogisu cuckoo bird,
kahi nakarubeki do not flutter a voice that
kowe na furushi so will be quite to no avail.

With that as a beginning, there were missives one after another, but as I did not reply, there came this:

obotsukana So faint, I strain
oto naki taki noto to hear this soundless waterfall,
midzu nareya you are its water,
yuku he mo shiranu though I know not where it goes,
se wo zo tadzunuru yet I seek the ford to meet.

When I send back, “I will answer soon,” he sends this so quickly that I wonder if he was in his right mind:

hito shirezu No one can know
ima ya ima ya to maybe now? maybe now?
matsu hodo ni the longer I wait
kaheri konu koso without hearing back from you
wabishikarikere the more wretched I become.

When this arrived, my mother said, “How awful, hadn't you better be a bit more mature about this and send him a reply.” So, I had a suitable person write a suitable reply. Even with that, he was genuinely happy and corresponded abundantly.

Another time, this was attached to a letter:

hama chidori Of the shore plovers,
ato mo nagisa ni no tracks, at sea's edge I see
fumi minu ha no letters in the sand,
ware wo kosu.nami is it that a strong wave has
uchiyaketsuramu washed over me and struck them out?

That time too, using a person who could write a properly serious response, I deceived him. There was another letter. “While I am glad to have your seemingly serious response, if this time again there is nothing from you yourself, how painful it will be,” and so on. Written in the margin of this grave epistle:

idzuretomo No matter whose hand,
wakanu kokoro ha your unknowable heart must

no cries of deer . . . - Allusion to *Kokinshū* no. 214:

here in this mountain
village autumn brings special
misery all through
the night the sound of the
belling deer awakens me
(Hodd, *Kokinshū*, 109)

eyelids meet not and see . . . - Pun on *abaru me*, "not meeting eyes," in other words, eyes that do not join lids in sleep, and *me* in the sense of "occasion," "the occasion of not meeting."

to which I reply - This is the first time she has replied directly, presumably in her own hand.

Takasago - Place-name that is a pillow word (fixed associated word) for deer.

Meeting Slope - Border point between Kyoto and the Lake Biwa region. The name Meeting Slope makes it a popular pillow word for meeting.

Nakoso - Place-name that conveniently means "come not this way."

what kind of morning - With this indirect phrase she indicates that this is the morning after they have first slept together. It is the content of his poem that answers her rhetorical question. He is no longer pleading for admittance to her presence; now he is smitten and cannot wait to see her again.

Waiting the while . . . - Contains puns: *yufugure-kure*, "evening"/"rafts," *nagare-nakare*, "flow"/"cry," *ohout*, "Ōi (river name)"/"many."

sohetaredo
kotabi ha saki ni
minu hito nogari

be present therein,
but this time for the first time,
I wish for the unseen one.

Even though he said this, I continued to deceive him as before. With our corresponding in this serious fashion, the days and the months passed.

Autumn has arrived. In another letter he writes, "How painful it is to me that you seem to regard me with such prudence; I have borne it till now, but how can we go on like this?"

shika no ne no
kikoenu sato ni
sumi nagara
ayashiku ahanu
me wo miru kana

Though I am living
where I hear no cries of deer
to waken me,
strangely, my eyelids meet not
and see only our not meeting.

to which I reply:

takasago no
onohé watari ni
sumafu tomo
shika samenu beki
me to ha kikanu wo

Even from those living
on the top of Takasago,
famed for deer,
I have never heard
such complaints of wakefulness.

"How truly strange it is."
After awhile, again from him:

afusaka no
seki ya nani nari
chikakeredo
koe wabinaireba
nagekite zo furu

How is it that this
Meeting Slope's barrier
seems so very close,
yet as I struggle to cross,
I just spend my days in sorrow?

In return:

koewaburu
afusaka yori mo
oto ni kiku
nakoso wo kataki
seki to shiranamu

I would have you know,
more difficult than Meeting Slope
where you struggle so
is the barrier I have heard of,
Nakoso, "Come not this way."

and so on, these serious missives went back and forth until—what kind of morning was it?

yufugure no
nagarekuru ma wo
matsu hodo ni
namida ohowi no
kaha to koso nare

Waiting the while
till evening flows in
flowing tears enough
to fill the Ōi River
where the logs flow down.

Brooding on many . . . - Her poem echoes the puns of his poem. The posture of resistance has yielded to one of uncertainty and reflection.

third morning - From this we know that the marriage has formally begun. As is the normal custom of the time, it will be a visiting marriage; she will not expect him to move in with her nor will she expect to move to his residence (see introduction, pp. 9-11).

he visits me here - That he seeks her out to visit even when she is away from home is indicative of the strength of his affection.

pink - This is the *nadeshiko*, "wild pink," a type of carnation associated with autumn. Characters used to write the name phonetically also mean the "caressed child," so the flower name also puns for "beloved girl" and the like.

as much as two nights in a row - That she finds it remarkable that he stays away for two nights in a row indicates indirectly the height of his ardor during this early period of marriage.

My reply:

omofu koto
obowi kaha no
yufugure wa
kokoro ni mo arazu
nakare koso sure

Brooding on many things,
dusk falls on Ōi River
where the logs flow,
without being aware of it
my tears flow and fall.

Then again, on about the third morning:

shinonome ni
okikeru sora ha
omohoede
ayashiku tsuyu to
kiekaheritsuru

White light before dawn
rising in the sky . . . we parted,
not understanding,
strangely, I felt as if I died
fading with the morning dew.

My reply:

sadame naku
kiekaheritsuru
tsuyu yori mo
soradanome suru
ware wa nani nari

With no permanence,
fading with the morning dew,
then what about me
left to rely in vain
on such a fleeting thing?

Things went on like this, then for one reason or another, as it comes about that I should be away from home for a while, he visits me there, and the next morning comes this note, "I had thought to spend a leisurely day with you there, but as it was not convenient. . . . What is this all about anyhow? To me, sometimes it seems as though you are hiding yourself away in the mountains." In reply, I send just this:

omohoenu
kaki ho ni oreba
nadeshiko no
hana ni zo tsuyu wa
tamarazarikeru

Not thought of,
the hedge where this pink blooms
and broken cannot bear
the dew that stays not,
tears fall endlessly.

With such exchanges going on, the ninth month arrived.

Toward the end of the month, I did not see him for as much as two nights in a row—my response when he sent only a letter:

kihakaeri
tsuyu mo mada hinu
sode no uhe ni
kessa ha shigururu
sora mo warnashi

The dew that faded
away is still here on
these sleeves that dry not,
again this morning—the sky
too cannot help drizzling.

Immediately, this reply came back:

omohiyaru	As the love longing
kokoro no sora ni	of my heart became
narinureba	one with the sky,
kesa ha shiguru to	no wonder this morning you
miyuru naruramu	looked and saw it drizzle.

And before I could complete a reply, he arrived himself.

Then another occasion, after some time had passed and I was not seeing him as often as before, on a day when the rain was falling, there was a message, "I'll come in the evening," and I sent back:

kashihagi no	Beneath the guardlan
mori no shitakusa	oak forest, the grass
kure goto ni	at every dusk
naho tanome to ya	hears "keep trusting me" and
moru wo miru miru	sees the rain dripping through the leaves.

For a reply, he cheated me by showing up himself.

And thus, the tenth month arrived. It was a period of abstinence for me; continually fretting at our forced separation, he wrote:

nagekitsutsu	Lamenting, I turn my sleeves
kahesu koromo no	inside out to dream of you
tsuyu keki ni	but they are damp with dew,
itodo sora sahe	and why must the sky
shigure sohuramu	add to this an endless drizzle?

In reply, though it was rather trite:

omohiaraba	Were the fire of loving
hinamashi mono wo	thought there, sleeves would dry,
ikade kaha	how is it then,
kahesu koromo no	these turned out sleeves,
tare mo nururamu	whether yours or mine, are wet?

With things going on in this way, there came a time when the person I relied on most, my father, was to leave for Michinoku Province. The season, late autumn, is such a sad time itself, and I still can not say that I am really used to seeing my husband; every time I see him now, I just burst into tears, and feel so sad and uneasy, there is nothing to

before I could complete a reply – In passages like these, one can see her quietly exulting in the power of her person and poetry to move him. In response to her poem, he not only reciprocates with a poem of his own but also rushes to her side.

oak forest – It is to be remembered that the euphemistic title for his office at this time is "a tall tree among oak trees."

he cheated me by showing up himself – It is clear that she regards herself as being shortchanged when he does not reply with a poem. Shinozuka Sumiko, whose interpretations I have found most illuminating, has singled this passage out for attention: "not only Kaneie but almost anyone would assume that showing up in person to meet her directly would be a much more profound expression of love than taking part in an exchange of poetry. However, it seems Michitsuna's Mother felt a little differently. . . . I would conjecture that for Michitsuna's Mother, the domain of communication between hearts that could be reached through the exchange of poetry was more important than anything" (Shinozuka Sumiko, "Kagerō nikki no shudai o megutte," in *Joryū rikishi bungaku kōza*, vol. 2 [Tokyo: Benseisha, 1990], 102-3).

period of abstinence – The activities of Heian aristocrats were directed by a complicated calendar based on the principles of Chinese yin-yang cosmology. This calendar, which plotted the moves of unseen forces, could determine which directions it was safe to move in, whether you should stay away from your residence for a specified period of time, whether you should stay secluded at home, and so on. Regular periods of abstinence were part of the calendar. During these periods, one abstained from contact with others, sexual activity, and certain foods. Being in violation of Shinto taboos, such as coming into contact with death or blood, could also require a period of abstinence. Underlying the whole system was the belief that staying in harmony with these prohibitions would assure health and good fortune and, conversely, breaking them would invite disaster (see introduction, pp. 22-24).

I turn my sleeves inside out – A folk belief held that sleeping with one's sleeves turned inside out would cause either one's lover to appear in one's own dream or oneself to appear in one's lover's dream.

rather trite – This is one of the places where she seems to be assessing something in the past from the vantage point of her present moment of writing. Looking back she seems to feel that this poem did not do justice to her emotions.

fire of loving – This phrase comes from the pun on *bi*, "fire," that is embedded in the word *omohi*, "love, longing." Some commentators speculate that it was her use of this conventional trope in this poem that occasions the above evaluation of the poem as trite (Uemura Eisuko, *Kagerō rikishi kaisaku taisei*, vol. 1 [Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1983-95], 111-12). However, most tropes in this age were conventional, and she uses the same trope in other poems without seeming to be bothered by its well-worn quality.

my father, was to leave for Michinoku Province – This marks the point when her father embarks on the career path of provincial governor, a position that was lucrative but socially inferior. It is most likely that this first post was obtained through the influence of his new son-in-law, Kaneie. Characteristically, Michitsuna's Mother is not interested in recording here what this move may have meant in terms of status or economic rewards, but rather the poignancy of parting from her father.

the one who is to go— Her father.

which I can compare it. My husband expresses sympathy for me and although he keeps saying he will never forget me, as I wonder if his heart will really be true to his words, I only feel even more sad and anxious.

Now the day has come for them all to leave; the one who is to go cannot restrain his tears, and I, the one who is to stay, am sadder than I can say. "We are way behind schedule"—even though urged thus by his attendants, he cannot leave, rolling up a letter and pushing it into an inkstone box beside him, once again breaking into tears that sprinkled down, he left the room. For awhile, I have not the heart to look at what he has left. Having watched until he went out of sight, pulling myself together, I approach, and when I look at what sort of thing was there, this poem is what I see:

kimi wo nomi	Only on you
tanomu tabi naru	I rely at this time, setting out;
kokoro ni ha	in my heart,
yukusuwe tohoku	thoughts of the long road ahead—
omohoyuru kana	may your life with her be as long.

Thinking that he intended to have this seen by my husband, I feel so sad, and place it back just as he had left it; not long after that, my husband comes to visit. As I am lost in my own thoughts and do not meet him with my eyes, he consoles me by saying, "Come now, this is a perfectly ordinary occurrence in the world. Your persistence in going on like this must mean you do not trust me." Noticing the letter in the inkstone box, "Ah, how touching," he says, and sends off after my father this:

ware wo nomi	Since you say you
tanomu to iheba	rely only on me, at the end
yuku suwe no	of the road ahead,
matsu no chigiri mo	Sue pines will betoken our vows;
kite koso ha mime	return and see us unchanged.

In this way, the days passed. Imagining my father traveling under strange skies brought sadness, and my husband's heart did not appear to be something I could rely on that much.

The twelfth month came. From him, who had gone up to Yokawa on some business, there was this, "I am snowed in. I miss you very much." I sent back with the messenger:

kohoruramu	Frozen, is it?
yokawa no midzu ni	Yokawa River—the snow that falls
furu yuki mo	there will not melt,
waga goto kiete	how unlike my thoughts of love
mono ha omowaji	in which I melt away.

Sue pines—Reference again to *Kokinshū* no. 1093 (cf. p. 59), where the lover pledges that his love could never change or else waves could rise and sweep over "Sue pines" mountain. *Suwe* also means "end," and Kaneie cleverly embeds the *suwe* of *suwe no matsu no* into *yukusuwe*, "the end of the road ahead," the word borrowed from the father's poem.

Yokawa—One of the three centers of the Tendai Buddhist monastery on Mt. Hiei in northeast Kyoto. It is recorded that on the fifth day of the twelfth month in this year, Kaneie's father attended a series of lectures on the *Lotus Sutra* at Mt. Hiei, and Kaneie may well have accompanied him (*Zenshū*, 134).

As we exchanged such words, the year, fleetingly and without purpose, came to an end.

Around the time of the new year, when I had not seen him for two or three days, I was to be away for awhile, so I left this with the instructions, "Should that person come, give him this":

shirareneba	My feelings of sadness
mi wo uguhisu no	unknown, like the warbler trilling forth
furi idetsutsu	with all its might,
nakite koso yuke	I have gone forth crying
no nimo yama nimo	to the fields, to the mountains.

His reply:

uguhisu no	The warbler seems
adani yukamu	capriciously to have gone forth
yamabe nimo	into the hills,
nakukowe kikaba	if I but hear its crying voice,
tadzune bakari zo	I shall seek it no matter how far.

As we carried on saying such things, something that had never been before came to be; I passed a miserable spring and summer, and then, around the end of the eighth month, somehow gave birth to a child. His care for me at that time was most tender.

Then, around the ninth month, just when he had left one day, for no particular reason, I opened a box that happened to be there and saw a letter obviously intended for another woman. Greatly astonished and thinking I would at least let him know that I had seen it, I write on the letter:

utagahashi	How suspicious,
hoka ni wataseru	I see this letter's tracks lead
fumi mireba	to another's door,
koko ya todaeni	As for here, am I to think
naramu to suramu	your visits will be no more?

As I worried, things went much as I feared, and around the end of the tenth month, there comes a time when I do not see him for three nights in a row. With an air of unconcern, he excuses himself by saying, "I just wanted to test your feelings by staying away for a while."

When evening fell, he says, "There is some business at court that I can't get out of," and leaves; I do not believe him and have a man follow him who came back saying, "It seems that his Lordship went to a certain place on Machi Alley and stayed there." So that is how it was; although I was utterly miserable, I didn't know what to say; it was about two or three

gave birth to a child - The phrase in the original is the vague *monosbitsu*. "I did something," but from the context we know this is the birth of her first and only child, Michitsuna.

letter's tracks - The familiar pun on *fumi*, "letter, writing" and "footsteps, tracks."

three nights in a row - In the circumstances, this could easily mean he has consummated a marriage with this other woman.

Machi Alley - A small street that ran north and south between Muromachi Street and Nishi no Toin Street. Some commentators identify it as present-day Shinmachi Street.

so I composed – It is very unusual for her to initiate an exchange. She might write a poem in response to an inquiry in prose from him, but this is one of the few places where she initiates the communication.

Sorrow, sorrowing . . . – This is one of her most famous poems. It has been included in several poetry anthologies, most notably in *Hyakunin Isshu* (One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each), the court poetry tradition alive for a large audience up until this day. For a recent translation of *Hyakunin Isshu* that gives detailed information about the text's tradition of interpretation, see Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart*.

In the Japanese poetic tradition, there are hundreds of poems expressing a woman's chagrin and sorrow at waiting alone through the night in vain for her lover to come, but this is perhaps the only poem by a woman who intentionally barred access to the lover. The last line of this poem has a staccato quality to it, almost as though the words overcome great reticence.

It is interesting that the headnotes to this poem in several anthologies and historical accounts make no mention that Kaneie had just taken up with another woman and change the context by saying Michitsuna's Mother's poem was a response to the chagrin of her husband when she took her time opening the door (Helen McCullough, *Okagami*, 167). This gives the poem a more conventional context, since it was almost unthinkable that a wife would bar the door to her husband.

to be so late to open – Kaneie picks up the verb *akuru*, "to dawn," literally, "to open into day," from Michitsuna's Mother's poem and puns on "to open a door." His poem along with his note seems to indicate that he is confident she would have opened the door to him if he had only stayed long enough.

Third Day Festival – The third day of the third month was the *momo no sebaei*, "Peach Festival," a celebration originally imported from China. It was customary to decorate the house with peach blossoms and drink wine in which peach blossom petals had been steeped. This festival is still observed in modern Japan, where it has been designated the Doll Festival and honors girls through the display of dolls that evoke Heian court culture.

My sister's husband – This is an interpretation based on the vague phrase in the original, *ima hito kaita*: "that other person." From the context, it is assumed that she is speaking of the husband of an elder or younger sister about whom we have very little information outside of what is provided in the diary. There is a record of Fujiwara Tanemasa marrying a daughter of Tomoyasu, Michitsuna's Mother's father, and from that piece of information, it is conjectured that the author is referring here to Tanemasa.

the wine drunk – The word *sugi*, "passed," can also be taken as a pun for *suki*, "drink wine."

days afterward, just before dawn, that there was a knocking on my gate. Thinking that it must be him, I felt wretched, and as I did not have the gate opened, he went off to that other place. The next morning, I felt I couldn't just leave things as they were, so I composed:

nagekitsu	Sorrow, sorrowing
hitori nuru yo no	when one sleeps alone the time
akuru ma ha	until night opens
ika ni hisashiki	into day, how long it is
mono to ka ha shiru	perhaps you now know it too.

I wrote this with more than usual care and sent it attached to a faded chrysanthemum. His response, "I was going to wait until dawn to see what would happen, but just then a messenger from the court came and called me away. It was just as you say":

geni ya geni	Truly, truly so,
fuyu no yo naranu	even though the fine wood gate is
maki no to mo	not a winter's night,
osoku akuru ha	to be so late to open,
wabishikarikeri	how miserable it is.

Well, it got very strange; he carried on quite openly as though there was nothing amiss when one might have expected him to try and hide the affair a little and make excuses about having to work at court and such. He became more and more inconsiderate; there was no end to it.

The year changed over and the third month arrived. We had the whole place decorated with peach blossoms for the Third Day Festival; I wait; he does not come. My sister's husband, who has hardly wanted to leave her side, did not come either. Then early on the morning of the fourth, both men arrived together. Our attendants, who had been living in a state of expectation since the night before, thinking there should be more blossoms, went out to gather them here and there. From within the house, watching them break off branches with such determination, I couldn't quite enter into the spirit of it all, and so I scribbled:

matsu hodo no	While we waited,
kinofu sugi ni shi	that day passed, the wine drunk,
hana no e ha	the flower branches
kefu oru koto zo	that you break and bring in
kahi nakarikeru	today will have no effect.

Having written it, I thought to myself, *Why not leave well enough alone, it*

"once in three thousand years" - A legendary peach tree in China was said to bring forth fruit only once in three thousand years. Kameie turns this into a metaphor for the eternal quality of his love.

[] - These square brackets note a place where the manuscript is damaged and a piece of text is missing.

I seemed to feel strange - *Zenshū* notes that this locution "seemed to" indicates a sense of distance between her feelings at the moment of writing and the feelings at the time of events: "She probably wrote it that way because in the midst of her recollection, she felt that her feelings at that time were so miserable she can hardly identify with them as her own" (*Zenshū*, 139).

trees of sorrow - The word for sorrow, *nageki*, can also be interpreted as *nageki*, "abandoned trees."

part and wither - Pun on *karuru*, "separate" and "wither."

would be disagreeable to have it seen, but he noticed my attempt to hide it and snatched it away, making this reply:

michitose wo	I should be seen as
mitsubeki mi ni ha	the "once in three thousand years" peach,
toshi goto ni	I would have you know
suku ni mo aranu	that mine is not a flower to
hana to shirasemu	be steeped in new wine each year.

My sister's husband, hearing this, responded with:

hana ni yori	Fearing that
suku tefu koto no	yesterday it would seem
yuyushiki ni	we had come only
yoso nagara nite	to get drunk on the flowers,
kurashite shi nari	we stayed elsewhere on purpose.

Nonetheless, now he was visiting the Machi Alley in a totally open manner. [] . . . him at least; I seemed to feel strange and to brood on regrets. Although I was caught in this inexpressible misery, what was I to do?

I have been watching the comings and goings of my sister's husband; now he is moving her to a more settled place. I who am to be left behind feel all the more the loss. Realizing that it will be difficult to see her at all, I am truly sad, and when the carriage comes to fetch her, I send this out:

nado kakaru	Why must it be thus,
nageki ha shigesa	while the trees of sorrow
masaritsutsu	grow more and more lush,
hito nomi karuru	this has become a house where
yado to naruramu	people just part and wither away.

The response was made by her husband:

omofu tefu	We care about you
waga koto no ha wo	we say, do not grieve placing
ada hito no	our leaves of words
shigeki nageki ni	in your lush tree of sorrow
sohete uramuna	for the fickle-hearted lover.

Leaving these words behind, they departed together.

Just as I thought would happen, I have ended up going to bed and waking up alone. So far as the world at large is concerned, there is nothing unsuitable about us as a couple; it's just that his heart is not as I would

the place that he has been familiar with for years – A reference to Tokihime, Kaneie's first wife, who had already borne him a son before he entered into the relationship with Michitsuna's Mother. She went on to bear him four more children through the years.

Tokihime and Michitsuna's Mother were social equals, coming from the same middle-ranking aristocratic class of provincial governors. It is clear from how Michitsuna's Mother writes about Tokihime that much as she seems to have wanted Kaneie to herself, she did not expect that his relationship with Tokihime would end. In fact, as is the case here, she seems to feel some sympathy with Tokihime when she knows that they are both being neglected. Judging from Tokihime's responses, however, the feeling of sympathy that they are both being neglected. Judging from Tokihime's distinct threat to the continuity of her marriage much as the Machi Alley woman was a threat to Michitsuna's Mother. Since they are from the same social class, she replies politely to inquiries from Michitsuna's Mother, but one can sense a guarded quality to her responses.

Even from your pond's depths . . . – There are three puns in this poem: *soko*, meaning both "your" and "bottom of pond," *karu*, "to resp" and "to be separated," and finally, *ne*, "root" and "to sleep."

Yodo marsh – Yodo is a place-name in *Kobinshū* associated with *makomo*, "wild rice." *Yodomo* can also mean "night-time dwelling." Tokihime here demonstrates her poetic erudition and indirectly makes the point, "This is his real home."

color deeply fades – Reference again to the notion that the dew and frost of autumn bring out a deeper color in leaves before they wither and die. It looks like a paradox in English because the verb *uisurofu* means "to change color," either to a deeper or lighter shade, whereas "fade" means "to change to a lighter color." Nonetheless, the change betokens imminent demise, and in that sense, the English "fade" is a better translation. In the sixth month, which is still the season of summer rains, it is usually the fading of flowers that is invoked in poetry. For her to speak of the lower leaves changing to a deeper color is to speak ahead of season. But then, the changing/fading of her husband's love is also "ahead of season."

these gazing eyes, I grow old – Pun on *nagame/furu ma ni*, "while the long rains fall" / "while I grow old gazing."

splendid will their color be – He turns her out of season motif into a positive statement to the effect, "your beauty/our love will only grow deeper as time passes."

Meeting fall—from favor – Pun on *aki*, "autumn" and "to grow tired of."

have it; it is not only me who is being neglected, I hear he has stopped visiting the place that he has been familiar with for years. As I have exchanged correspondence with that lady before, I send this to her on the third or fourth day of the fifth month:

soko ni sahe
karu to ifu naru
makomo gusa
ikanaru sawa ni
ne wo todamuramu

Even from your pond's depths,
they say it has been reaped,
the wild rice,
in what marsh now does it put
down its roots and stay to sleep?

Her reply:

makomo gusa
karu to ha yodo no
sawa nare ya
ne wo todomu tefu
sawa ha soko to ka

The wild rice,
whence it is reaped, is of course,
this Yodo marsh, its home,
but I thought the marsh where it
took root and slept was your place.

The sixth month arrived. From the first part of the month, long rains poured down. Looking out at the garden, something I wrote for myself:

waga yado no
nageki no shitaba
iro fukaku
uisurohi ni keru
nagame furu ma ni

Around my house,
trees sorrow, their lower leaves'
color deeply fades,
while the long rains pour into
these gazing eyes, I grow old.

As I pondered these things, the seventh month came.

Around the time when I was thinking to myself, *if the marriage is over and done, perhaps that would be better than just bawling bim come infrequently*, there was a day when he visited. As I said nothing, there was an uncomfortable feeling in the room; in the course of making conversation, one of my attendants happened to mention the "lower leaves" poem that I had written the other day. Upon hearing it, he said this:

ori narade
irodzuki ni keru
momidjiba ha
toki ni ahite zo
iro masari keru

Even out of season
these maple leaves have taken
a scarlet color,
meeting the time, how much more
splendid will their color be.

At which, I drew the inkstone to me and wrote this:

aki ni afu
iro koso mashite

Meeting fall—from favor
their color is even more

wabishikere
shitaba wo dani mo
nageki shimono wo

tired and worn,
the lower leaves can only
grieve in a forgotten forest.

Thus his behavior continued; not breaking off relations entirely, he visited from time to time, but our hearts did not melt toward one another and so we drew farther apart. If he came and I was in a bad temper, he would be floored, then get up and leave abruptly. On one occasion, someone living nearby who understood the situation said this upon his leaving:

Smoke from salt fires . . . - Salt fires are the fires used to boil the vats of brine to make salt. This poem pivots on several puns, *fusube*, "to smolder/to be jealous," *kyūruhi*, "to smoke/to puffler," and the embedded pun *bi*, "fire," within *omohi*, "thoughts."

moshiho yaku
keburi no sora ni
tachinuru ha
fusube ya shitsuru
kuyuru omohi ni

Smoke from salt fires
going up into the sky,
is not his going
up in smoke due to the fires
of jealous thoughts causing pain?

And so on, our exchange of resentments had got to the point that the neighbors were even meddling; these days I have not seen him for a particularly long while.

small arrow - Miniature arrows were often attached to the pillars of the sleeping place as talismans to ward off evil.

Although I thought . . . - The subject and object for *omohi idzuru*, "to think of," are not specified, and commentators vary in their opinions as to whether she is saying "I thought you no longer thought of me" or "I thought I no longer thought of you." *Zenshū* commentators, whose interpretations I am in general following, have opted for the latter, but I have decided to render both possibilities in the translation. The poem also contains a pun on the word *ya*, "arrow/hey!" The use of such a colloquial expression as "hey" is unusual in court poetry. *Zenshū* notes that this poem was included in a later poetry anthology under the "humorous poems" category (*Zenshū*, 142). Perhaps this use of colloquialism was the reason for such a categorization. It is also interesting that she should use such playful language in an apparently serious poem.

my house was on his way - As we learn later in the diary, the author's residence was "at the edge of the training ground for the horses of the Left Imperial Guard," which would have put it on the eastern edge of the imperial palace compound at approximately present-day Ichijō Avenue and Nishi no Tōin Street. Kanetō's residence at this time is unknown.

"In the long nights of autumn, when there is no sleep" - Most commentators agree that this line is a quote from the "White-haired woman of Shang-yang" by the famous Tang poet, Po Chū-i. The poem is about the woman of Shang-yang who came to the palace of the Tang emperor, Hsuan-tsang, at the age of sixteen, but because of the popularity of his favorite consort, Yang Kuei-fei, never had a chance to meet her lord and died at the age of sixty without ever seeing him. A couplet from this poem is included in the popular *Wakan rōsetsū* (An Anthology of Japanese and Chinese Verse for Recitation) (Kawaguchi Hisao, ed. *Wakan rōsetsū*, Ryōjin bishō, vol. 73 of *Nihon-kyōten bungaku taishū* [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967], 106). Although this anthology was compiled after the writing of this diary, since it was an anthology of the best-known couplets of Chinese poetry, the poem's inclusion there attests to its wide currency.

In ordinary times, I was not like this, but when my heart was thus distracted, I had a tendency not to notice the objects around me. I thought to myself, *Will it be thus, our relations will end without there being a single keepsake for me to remember the affair by?* About ten days after this, a letter from him arrived; among other things, he said, "Send back the small arrow attached to one of the pillars of the bed chamber." So *there was a keepsake*, I thought as I untied and took down the arrow. I sent it back with this:

omohi idzuru
toki mo araji to
omohedomo
ya to ifu ni koso
odorokarenure

Although I thought
you no longer thought of me
nor I of you?
"Hey, return the arrow."
you said and I was startled.

Thus, he as good as stopped coming at all, but as my house was on his way to and from court, at dusk and at dawn, try as I might not to listen, I could not help hearing him clear his throat as he passed by and I would be unable to melt away into sleep. "In the long nights of autumn, when there is no sleep"—yes, it is just like that; seeing, hearing, feeling these things defies description. And just when I was wishing that somehow I would not have to be subjected to such sights and sounds, I hear my attendants in low whispers saying things like, "The one who used to

the place . . . that has a lot of children – Once more a reference to Tokihime, Kaneie's first wife. This manner of referring to her is particularly interesting because at this time in the diary Tokihime did not yet have a lot of children. She had only the one son, Michitaka. This is a place where it is clear Michitsuna's Mother is writing a long time after these events with a consciousness of what eventually happened.

"How shall I do it? There is something I would ask . . ." – A quotation from a poem that was anthologized in *Yamato monogatari*, section 89. The full poem is:

How shall I do it?
There is something I would ask
trout in the fish weirs,
where is he caught, the one who
does not ask after me?

(Kaigiri Yoichi ed., *Tabetori monogatari. Ise monogatari. Yamato monogatari. Heichū monogatari*, vol. 8 of *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* [Tokyo: Shōgakkō, 1972], 327)

By quoting the first half of the poem, the author intends us to understand her real meaning, which is the second half of the poem. For another translation, see Mildred M. Tabbara, *Tales of Yamato: A Tenth Century Poem Tale* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 50.

another year – The first year of the Tenjoku era, that is, 957.

traces and books – The now familiar pun on *fumi*, "traces, footsteps/writing, letters, books."

only in your bay – The reader may wonder why Kaneie persists in protestations of steadfast love when his actions contradict it. When I asked this question of Akiyama Ken, he replied, "Within the conventions of *uwaka* poetry, the only mode of expression available to him is the avowal of devoted love."

be so fond of her never seems to come now." Hearing such whispered gossip, I feel so unhappy; the fall of every evening is just wretched.

I understand that his visits to the place that one hears has a lot of children have definitely stopped as well. How sad, thinking her pain must be even worse than mine, I send her a letter of consolation. It was around the time of the ninth month, I wrote profusely and included this:

fuku kaze ni	To the blowing wind,
tsukete mo tohamu	I attach these words of concern,
sasagani no	though the path of the
kayohishi michi ha	visiting spider has vanished
sora ni tayu to mo	completely into the sky.

Her reply, written with great care:

iro kaharu	When one sees that it
kokoro to mireba	can change the color of leaves
tsukete tofu	and hearts, this wind,
kaze yuyushiku mo	even bearing tidings of
omohoyuru kana	concern, is somehow terrible.

Yet, seemingly unable to break off relations with me entirely, he visited from time to time and winter came. Going to bed, rising, I had only my little one for a companion; without meaning to, I would find myself reciting the old poem, "How shall I do it? There is something I would ask trout in the fish weirs . . ."

We crossed into another year and spring came. Around this time, he forgot to take a book he had been reading and had me send it to him. On the wrapping paper, I wrote:

fumi okishi	This beach, this heart where
ura mo kokoro mo	you left your traces and books
aretareba	so wild a shore it is,
ato wo todomenu	the plover's tracks wash away
chidori narikeri	as soon as they are made.

His reply sent back as a sort of excuse:

kokoro aru to	"Your heart has strayed,"
fumi kahesu to mo	so you say returning my book,
hama chidori	but as for the tracks
ura ni nomi koso	of this shore plover, they are
ato ha todomeme	left behind only in your bay.

As his messenger was there, I sent back:

hama chidori
ato no tomani wo
tadzune tote
yukue mo shiranu
urami o yasemu

"Look where the plover
left its tracks on the shore,"
you say, but, gazing out
over the bay, I can only resent
not knowing where it went.

and, exchanging such words as these, we came into summer.

place that was in such ascendancy – The Machi Alley woman's place.

choosing an auspicious direction – That is, choosing a direction in accordance with the astrological calendar.

he rode out in a single carriage with her – For him to ride in a single carriage with her is to make a public display of his intimacy with her.

At the place that was in such ascendancy these days, it became time for the birth of a child, and choosing an auspicious direction in which to remove her for the lying in, he rode out in a single carriage with her, raising a continuous din that could be heard over the entire capital. It was such a racket, so painful to my ears, and did he really have to pass right by my gate? I scarcely felt like myself at all, unable to say anything, and hearing noisy complaints from the lowliest servants to my closest attendants, who were saying things like, "Such a thing, it tears one apart. And there are so many other streets he could have taken," I thought that all I wanted to do was die, yet things do not go as we want. From now on, I thought wretchedly, if the best is not to be, then it would be better to break off relations entirely so that I wouldn't have to see him. About three or four days after this, there is a letter from him. Thinking over and over to myself as I read it how awfully cold it was, I noticed this, "Someone has not been feeling well here, so I have not been able to come and visit. However, just yesterday, a safe delivery was accomplished. I haven't wanted to trouble you with the ritual pollution." This surpassed all for being bizarre. I merely sent back, "Message received." When I heard that in response to my servant's inquiries, the messenger had responded, "The household was blessed with a boy," I felt as though my chest were blocked. About three or four days later, he showed up himself as though nothing were the matter. With a look on my face of *what are you doing here*, I did not welcome him in, and finding things very uncomfortable, he left. This happened often.

The seventh month arrived and around the time of the annual sumo tournament, two bundles of cloth, one of used and one of new cloth, are delivered. "Please, sew these," is the message. I am appalled, what on earth does he mean by this. Just looking at them, I feel my eyes darken with anger. My mother says, "How regrettable. There must be no one over there who can do these." Some of the more outspoken attendants gathered around and said, "This is really the limit. Suppose we don't do it and just see what sort of bad things they'll say about us." And so it was decided; we sent the bundles back and as we suspected, we heard he had to divide them up here and there to get them done. He must have

ritual pollution – Due to the connection of childbirth with blood, birth was considered polluting. *bizarre* – She seems to regard it as bizarre that he would communicate with her so casually about the matter.

sumo tournament – The sport of Sumo wrestling had been part of the court's annual celebratory activities at least from the eighth century. The tournament was held in the seventh month, which was closer to the present calendar's August.

two bundles of cloth – One of a wife's chief contributions to the marriage relationship was the production of clothing for the husband and his household. For someone of Kaneie's rank, participation in court ceremonies and festivities required a large quantity of fashionable and beautiful clothing. Later, in book three, we will see her describing with nostalgia some of the garments that she had made for her husband. Her skill as a designer and seamstress may have been one of the qualities that attracted Kaneie to the author in the first place.

Cloth was very valuable and therefore recycled, which is why he sends both old and new cloth. The production of the clothing was a joint activity for the women in the household, as we can see from their participation in the discussion and eventual decision about the request. The obvious chagrin of Michisuna's Mother and her women attendants could be because some of the requested garments might be women's clothing intended for the Machi Alley woman, or simply because the request comes at a time of estrangement.

Some of the more outspoken attendants – The phrase in the original here is *namagokoro aru bito*, "persons with a raw heart," the basic meaning of *nama* being "uncooked." Accordingly *nama* can be extended to mean "inexperienced." I have further extended this to "outspoken." Furthermore, I differ from the *Zenshū* commentators here in interpreting this remark about the attendants as part of the narrative prose in this section as opposed to part of quoted speech.

found it very cruel, for more than twenty days, there were no inquiries from him.

Then, on what occasion I can't quite recall, there was a letter from him. It said, "I would very much like to come and see you, but it seems you are feeling very cold toward me. Certainly, if you were to say 'Come,' in fear and trembling, I would be at your door." I thought not to send a response to this, but as on all sides there were cries of "That would be too cruel of you. It would really be too much," I sent back:

plumes of words – Plumes of the pampas grass were conventionally likened to putting things forth clearly; therefore the phrase "put forth plumes" could also mean "to express one's meaning clearly."

ho ni idete
ihaji ya sara ni
ohoyoso no
nabiku wobana ni
makasete mo mimu

Not putting forth plumes
of words, rather will I charge
the pampas grass to
sway whither it will,
in general, I will watch.

He sent back:

ho ni ideba
madzu nabiki namu
hana susuki
kochi tefu kaze no
fukamu mani mani

When the plume comes forth
whither first will it sway,
flowering pampas grass?
With the east wind, which says
"come hither," and so it does.

east wind – The word for east wind, *kochi*, also means "here" and can be used to express "come here."

As there was a messenger to take back a response, I wrote:

arashi nomi
fukumeru yado ni
hana susuki
ho ni idetari to
kahi ya nakaramu

At a house that is
only buffeted by storms,
flowering pampas grass,
even if it puts forth plumes
of words, what good does it do?

a good exchange – It is interesting to note that the author's sense of what constitutes a "good exchange" is not necessarily related to the content of the verses. There is no need to overtly express conciliation in the poems; it is the engagement in the poetry exchange that is the most important.

While still lying down – There is very little of the explicitly erotic in the diary. However, the inclusion of this phrase about lying down implies that they are still lying in bed after making love, and it charges the next section and particularly the poems exchanged with a muted erotic quality.

wild-looking bue – In the classical lexicon the word *iro*, "color," is full of connotations ranging from the "world of the senses" and "the beauty of a woman" to "sensual love." Its meaning in this poem is nonspecific, paralking of all those connotations.

white dew – Again this is a reference to the notion that it is the dew of autumn that brings out the most brilliant color in the flowers and leaves. With the images of the pampas grass a few poems before, it is clear that the setting of the diary has shifted to autumn. As with "color" above, the meaning of dew here is indeterminate but points to a constellation of connotations, which here include the season of autumn, tears, sorrow, and a hint of eroticism introduced with the notion of wetness.

and so on, we had a good exchange and he came to visit again.
While still lying down and gazing at the flowers of the front garden blooming in rank, multicolored profusion, we said the following. It seems we both had feelings of resentment toward each other. When he breaks the silence with this:

momo kusa ni
midarete miyuru
hana no iro ha
tada shiratsuyu no
oku ni ya aruramu

The wild-looking hue
of these myriad flowers,
is it due only
to the white dew fallen there,
or have their hearts turned cold?

I reply:

mi no aki wo
omohi midaruru
hana no uhe no
tsuyu no kokoro ha
iheba sara nari

Thinking of autumn,
these rank-growing wild flowers,
were they to speak,
of the heart of the dew
upon them, it would be thus.

late rising moon – In the lunar calendar, the dates of the month correlated with the phases of the moon, so we can infer that this exchange was taking place after the twentieth of the month.

desperate – This word is an interpretation. The original has only *sa*, “like that.” The implication appears to be that she does not feel so desperate for him to say that she would *sipop* to pleading. It is remarkable how well the author conveys the meaning of what was not said in this conversation.

so be stayed – With these words, she signals her victory in this dance of emotion, poetry, and will.

leaves of words – Pun on *koto no ba*, “words,” which includes the word *ba*, “leaves.”

the tree trunk itself – Pun on *mitake*, “myself,” which includes the word *kana*, “tree trunk.”

mi no aki wo
omohi midaruru
hana no uhe no
tsuyu no kokoro ha
iheba sara nari

Thinking of autumn,
these rank-growing wild flowers,
were they to speak,
of the heart of the dew
upon them, it would be thus.

Saying such things, it was painful between us as always.

As the late rising moon was just about to emerge from behind the mountain ridge, he makes as though to depart. Then, perhaps seeing the expression on my face as I think *surely, tonight at least he doesn't have to go*, he says, “Well, if you really think I ought to stay . . . ?” But I didn't feel that desperate, so I say:

ikaga semu
yama no ha ni dani
todomarade
kokoro mo sora ni
idemu tsuki woba

What is there to do?
Since your heart is like the moon
that does not linger
at the edge of the mountain
but would emerge into the sky.

He replies:

hisakata no
sora ni kokoro no
idzu to iheba
kage ha soko ni mo
tomarubeki kana

You say this heart-moon
emerges into the o'er-spread sky,
yet will it leave
its reflection
behind in this pond.

and so he stayed.

On another occasion, there was something like a typhoon and he came calling about two days later. “With a wind like the other day, no matter what, an ordinary person would have inquired after our well-being,” I say, and he seemed to think there was some truth to this, yet with nonchalance he replies:

koto no ha ha
chiri mo ya suru to
tome okite
kefu ha mi kara mo
tofu ni ya ha aranu

With leaves of words
all scattered and pinned to
the ground—today
has not the tree trunk itself
come to inquire after you?

I reply thus:

chirikitemo
tohi zo shite mashi
koto to ha wo

Even scattered,
could they not have come this way
those leaves of words,

east wind . . . *here* – This poem and the next poem pun on *kochi*, which means both “east wind” and “here.”

be seemed to acknowledge – Here was another victory.

rain falls . . . *shake me off* – A pun on *furi*, “to fall” (of rain), and *furi idzu*, “to shake someone off and leave.” It implies the simile, “to shake me off like cold rain.”

well, isn't he a willful person – With this elliptical sentence, she acknowledges this time when poetry failed.

“wild oats” – The phrase is “dropped seed” and refers to a child not officially recognized by the father. “Illegitimate” is too legalistic a term for this fluid society.

unrecognized son – Similar to the “dropped seed,” the expression denotes the male offspring of a prince from a union with a low-ranking attendant.

kochi ha sabakari
fukishi tayori ni

the east wind surely blew that hard
to bring their inquiries here.

He rejoins with:

kochi to iheba
ohozo unarishi
kaze ni ikaga
tsukete tohamu
atara na date ni

That east wind blows so
wildly, how could one ever
trust it to inquire
after the right person,
it might end up somewhere else.

Being in no mind to be beaten on this one, I say further:

chirasaji to
oshimi okikeru
koto no ha wo
kinagara dani zo
kesa ha tohamashi

Those leaves of words
that you say you are loath
to scatter elsewhere,
then, at least, this morning could
you not have said something first?

At this, he seemed to acknowledge that what I said was reasonable.

At another time, around the tenth month, he says, “There is some business I simply must attend to” and makes as though to leave. While it is not quite raining hard enough to be called “winter downpour,” it is quite miserable and still he intends to go out. In some astonishment at this, I can’t help saying:

kotowari no
wori to ha miredo
sa yo fukete
kakuya shigure no
furi ha idzubekei

Though I see this is
a time you have reason to go,
yet, the night deepens
and the cold rain falls thus
must you shake me off and go?

but even at this—well, isn’t he a willful person?

Things going along in this fashion, it seems that after the birth of her child, that “splendid” personage of Machi Alley lost favor; in the midst of my feelings of hatred, I had wished to see her live long enough to suffer just as I had; now not only had that come to pass, but to top it all off, was not the child that had been the occasion of all that annoying clatter dead? The lady was the “wild oats” of an unrecognized son of a prince. Needless to say, she was extremely base. Just for a time, she had been able to cause a stir among unknowing people; now suddenly it had come to this—how must she be feeling? When I thought she must be even a little more miserable than I had been, at that moment, I felt as though I

I felt as though I could breathe again – Literally the expression is “my chest clears.” This passage is one that has occasioned a lot of comment. It shocks because it bares thoughts that we as human beings may have but tend not to make public. For that reason, the passage is often singled out as an example of her honesty. For instance, Murai Jun has said, “Here the hatred of the author for the Machi Alley woman is nakedly expressed. Due to this, there are some readers who criticize the author, but as for me, I am inclined to feel respect for this author who has written down her true feelings to this degree with no prevarication as the truth of her heart” (Murai Jun, *Kagerō rikki zenshūdenki* [Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1978], 81).

“swept the pillow” for him at his former place – This means he is again being welcomed to Tokihime’s place. Pillows were usually made of wood so they were swept clean of dust after not being used for a while.

“it is because you are so young” – In this elliptical citation of criticism from an acquaintance may be seen the implied norm of forbearance to which she was expected to conform. Her refusal to conform is attributed to her immaturity.

Just write it all down – This introduces her long poem. Since the production of long poems was very rare at this time, it is an unorthodox form of expression for her to choose. The question arises of why she would choose poetry over prose in this situation. Shinozuka Sumiko suggests that “it can be said particularly of book one that there is a gap between Michitsuna’s Mother as a composer of poetry, whether *uwaka* or long poems, and Michitsuna’s Mother as a writer of prose, almost as though she were a different person. She chose the long poem form precisely because she had that much to say. There is no doubt she would not have been able to write it in the form of a prose letter. . . . We can also see here the strength of Michitsuna’s Mother’s ability to write poetry” (Shinozuka, *Kagerō rikki no kokoro to byōgen*, 80).

color of your leaves of words – Pun on *koto no ha*, “leaves” and “words.”

left beneath a neglected tree sorrowing – Pun on *nageki/nagakareki*, “tossed out, neglected tree” and “to sorrow, lament.”

Winter . . . regrets for him – Reference to her father’s departure for the north country in late autumn of the year before last and the grief she felt that first winter that he was gone.

be bad left words – Reference to her father and his parting poem for Kanete.

quick as frost falls and melts – This simile is implied in the original with an image that is embedded in the associative vocabulary of *shimo*, “frost,” and *okitsu*, “fall” (as of frost), as well as “felt” (with respect to his words), and *bodo mo naku*, “quickly.”

could breathe again. Now, I hear they have “swept the pillow” for him at his former place. However, as for here, since he visits as irregularly as before, there are times when I think there is no affection left between us. My little one here has just begun to say a few words. Whenever his father takes leave of us, he always says, “See you soon,” and the little one hearing this goes around imitating him.

Thus again, it is still not a world in which I can feel at ease even though meddlesome people say things like, “It is because you are so young”—I just find it too cruel of him when he says things like “Have I done anything wrong?” with such an air of innocence and unconcern that I don’t know what to do. There are just these millions of thoughts milling around in my mind; when I get so riled up that I want to tell him every bit of what is on my mind, I am so upset that I just can’t say anything at all. I think to myself, *what if I just write it all down and show it to him*:

omohe tada mukashi mo ima mo waga kokoro nodokekarade ya hatenubeki misomeshi aki ha koto no ha no usuki iro ni ya utsurofu to nageki no shita ni nagakareki fuyu ha kumowoi ni wakare yuku hito o oshimu to hatsu shigure kumori mo ahezu furi sohochi kokoro bosoku ha arishikado kimi ni ha shimo no wasuru na to ihiokitsu to ka kikishikaba sari to mo to omofu hodo mo naku tomi ni harukeki watari nite shiragumo bakari arishikaba kokoro sora nite heshi hodo ni	Just think on this, in times past and now too, my heart knows no peace, will it be thus forever? That autumn when first we met, was not the color of your leaves of words so pale even then that when they faded, I was left beneath a neglected tree sorrowing only. Winter—in the midst of regrets for him who left for a place far beyond the clouds from which fell the first cold drizzle drenching me, so forlorn I felt, yet, as I heard he had left words for you, those words, “Do not forget her,” thus would it be so, I thought. Yet, quick as frost falls and melts, so suddenly there was distance between us; my father far away, me adrift, knowing nothing, one with the white clouds, as my heart took to empty skies, time passed, heavy mist stretched between us and severed our relations—
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no eggs were laid – An associated image with wild geese and a pun on *kabi nashi*, “no eggs” and “nothing happened.”

empty as the cicada's shell – When a cicada larva has emerged from the ground and climbed up a tree, its exterior dries and cracks open; the flying insect emerges, leaving the shell behind.

how shallow it was – This begins a long string of associative vocabulary related to water and containing the puns, *ura*, “heart”/“bay” and *ukise*, “shoals”/“wretched world.”

would it vanish, let it go – A reference to the possibility of her death. She is so miserable she would just as soon die.

like a bear vine creeping down Azalea Hills – Associated images with Michinoku, the northern province where her father is posted.

if I were to go to a world where the tears of grief would not fall – Reference to becoming a nun. This is the first time she explicitly considers this option as a way out of her troubles.

fine Chinese robes – Well-worn robes were a conventional metaphor for one's spouse.

even without warm lining – Pun on *ura mo naku*, literally “without a lining,” but also taken figuratively to mean “without ulterior motive or prejudice,” which I have rendered here with the adverb “simply.”

<p>kasumi mo tanabiki taenikeri mata furusato ni karigane no kaheru tsura ni ya to omohitsutsu furedo kahi nashi kakushitsutsu waga mi munashiki semi no ha no ima shimo hito no usukarazu namida no kaha no hayaku yori kaku asamashiki ura yuwe ni nagaruru koto mo taedomo ikanaru tsumi ka omokaramu kakute nomi hito no ukise ni tadayohite tsuraki kokoro ha midzu no awa no kieba kienamu to omohedomo kanashiki koto ha michinoku no tsutsuji no oka no kuma tsudzura kuru hodo wo dani matade ya ha sukuse tayubeki abukuma no ahimite dani to omohitsutsu nageku namida no koromo de ni kakaranu yo ni mo fubeki mi wo nazo ya to omohedo afu hakari kake hanarete ha shika suga ni kohishikarubeki karagoromo uchikite hito no</p>	<p>yet, I lived in hope that in spring with the line of returning geese, you too would return to your old home. Time passed and no eggs were laid, nothing happened, going on like this my life became as empty as the cicada's shell, as thin as its wings, your love, nor is it only just now that it has become so. From the first time how shallow it was, that is why my heart flows in a river of tears, the bay never fills. What heavy load of sins from former lives binds me to you? I would leave but I cannot get away, thus I float and drag upon the shoals of this wretched life, this suffering heart, a bit of foam upon water, although I think would it vanish, let it go, the only sad thing is not to wait until my father from that far northland like a bear vine creeping down Azalea Hills returns. Tell me how could I not wait and cut off the ties of former lives between parent and child? Over and over, I think to myself I must see him once more. What if I were to go to a world where the tears of grief would not fall onto my sleeves? But if I place on the scales spending my life without meeting you, I know in a moment, I would be wanting you again. When I think of how I am simply used to you as someone gets used to fine Chinese robes even without warm lining,</p>
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leave this world – Reference again to becoming a nun.

with heaven's drifting clouds – Allusion to *Koketsubō* no. 784:

as distant as those
drifting clouds in the heavens
has my love become
and yet each day I see him
here before my searching eyes (Rodd, *Koketsubō*, 274)

This poem is a particularly appropriate allusion here because it was composed by the family of a woman to criticize her wayward husband, who had ceased visiting in the evening.

our young pine – Her infant son, Michitsuna.

seaweed you don't see me – There is a pun here on *miru*, a type of seaweed, and *miru*, "to see."

shells of meeting – The word for shell, *kabi*, is homophonous with meeting. The two halves of a bivalve shell meeting is also an image in the background of the pun.

if the white waves roll up – Metaphor for his visiting her.

ura mo naku	then if I think to leave this world,
nareshi kokoro	this vulgar world behind,
omohite ha	it would be no use, memories
ukiyo wo sareru	would pursue me and
kahi mo naku	bring tears, such would it be.
omohi ide naki	Thinking this way,
ware ya semu	thinking that way, always thinking,
to omohi kaku omohi	while I brood thus,
omofu ma ni	if I consider the dust piled up
yama to tsumoreru	on mountains of our
shikitahe no	bedclothes, it cannot even match
makura no chiri mo	the number of nights
hitori ne no	that I have slept alone.
kazu ni shitoraba	Something is severed,
tsukinubeshi	I feel as though you have gone
namika taenuru	on a trip far away.
tabi naru to	Even on that day after
omofu mono kara	the typhoon blew
kaze fukite	when I finally
hitohi mo mieshi	saw you again, you swept
amagumo ha	away with heaven's drifting clouds.
kaherishi toki no	In consolation,
nagusame ni	parting you said, "See you soon."
ima komu to ihishi	Thinking these words
koto no ha wo	must be true, our young pine
sa mo ya to matsu no	waits endlessly
midori go no	mimicking your voice,
taezu manebu mo	each time I hear it,
kiku goto ni	I think ill of you, tears just fall.
hito waroge naru	If I compare myself
namida nomi	to a sea filled to the brim,
waga mi wo umi to	there is no seaweed
tatahedomo	you don't see me
miru me mo yosenu	nor on Mitsu Bay
mitsu no ura ha	are there shells of meeting.
kahi mo araji to	No good it does to cry,
shirinagara	even knowing this to be so,
inochi araba to	"while there is life, rely on me,"
tanomekoshi	you said, I remember it well.
koto bakari koso	If the white waves roll up
shiranami no	on my shore, this is what
tachi mo yorikoba	I long to ask them about.
tohamahoshikere	

This I wrote and placed on the two-tiered shelf for him to find.

In a few days, he visited as usual, since I did not go out from my inner chamber to meet him, it was painful for him to stay, so he went

I received this from him! – Her surprise at receiving a long poem back from him is registered with an exclamatory particle here. This was quite an effort on his part, and he does express his feelings openly, which is perhaps why although his poem is critical of her and offers nothing in the way of apology, it still serves as a basis for reconciliation.

fades with each meeting, not so . . . – With a pun on *aki*, "autumn" and "to grow tired of," and a play on the range of meaning that *tsune* can have, from "usual" to "always," Kaneie can say simultaneously, "Love is usually thought to wane with each meeting" and "Meeting each autumn like anniversary of our marriage, my love is always true."

'protect this child' – Reference to her father's parting poem.

tree of sorrow – Perennial pun on *nageki*, "neglected tree"/"sorrow."

green pine who pines – He picks up her reference to their son as a young pine and then makes the conventional pun on *matsu*, "pine"/"to wait." Pines by association call up Tago Bay in the Suruga district, which in turn evokes the famous view of Mt. Fuji from Tago Bay.

around Mt. Fuji – Mt. Fuji was an active volcano in this era, hence its use as a metaphor for hidden passions and jealousy.

cut the tie – This begins a string of associative language related to thread, including the pun *mabikuru*, "to wind on a spool" and "come."

confused and lost . . . falcon – An extended pun elaborates the sense of this passage. *Hasbitaka no suzu* means "falcon's bells"; *basbitaka no suzuro nite* means "having nothing to hang on to, unsettled."

flew to ask after you – Contains pun on *tohibikuru*, "to fly and come" and "ask and come," which makes a bridge between the falcon image and his relation of a particular visit.

but you lay down alone – Reference to the night she barred the door to him.

the wakeful moon shone with every drop of its light on your fine wooden door – A metaphor for himself pounding on her door.

away taking only the letter. Then, I received this from him!

orisomeshi
toki no momidji no
sadamenuku
utsurofu iro ha
sanomi koso
afu aki goto ni
tsune narame
nageki no shita no
kono ha ni ha
itodo ihioku
hatsu shimo ni
fukaki iro ni ya
nari ni kemu
omofu omohi no
tae mo sezu
itsu shika matsu no
midorigo wo
yukite ha mimu to
suruga naru
tago no uranami
tachi yoredo
fuji no yamabe no
keburi ni ha
fusburu koto no
tae mo sezu
amagumo to nomi
tanabikeba
taenu waga mi ha
shiraito no
mahikuru hodo wo
omohaji to
amata no hito no
we ni sureba
mi ha hashitaka no
suzuro nite
natsu kuru yado no
nakereba zo
furu su ni kaheru
mani mani ha
tohikuru koto no
arishikaba
hitori fusuma no
toko ni shite
nezame no tsuki no
maki no to ni
hikari nokosazu
morite kuru

The maple leaves when
first we met, colored with the season
were inconstant and
faded, just so it is thought
love usually
fades with each meeting, not so
is this love of mine.
Since those words, "protect this child,"
beneath the tree of
sorrow were spoken, even
when frost first fell,
did not the color of these
leaves turn deeper still?
I long, I burn, a fire
that never ends,
I want to go and see
our little green pine
who pines for me, yet although
as often as the
waves of Tago Bay pound in
on Suruga shore
have I come, around Mt. Fuji
the smoke smolders
from a fire of jealousy
that never ends,
and while it becomes drifting clouds
that trail between us,
I am not one to cut the
tie that binds me as
fast as thread is wound to a spool.
"He does not love her
enough to come," so many
say bitterly,
confused and lost, I am a falcon,
bells on its feet, who,
finding no welcoming perch,
returns to his old nest.
As things went along, there was
that time when I flew
to ask after you, but you
lay down alone, and
although the wakeful moon
shone with every
drop of its light on your
fine wooden door,
not even your shadow
deigned to peep through.

Who then would see dawn with the woman of one night? – Reference to a casual liaison. He frames this as a rhetorical question implying the answer, "Surely not I!"

become bound to someone unbound – Another possible interpretation for *kakarazhu*, which I have translated as "unbound," is "someone who would not occasion your complaining." Either way he is going so far as to suggest that she consider taking a different husband.

Chinese robes – Once again he takes up a phrase from her poem and alters its context.

just lay them over the bamboo frame – It was the custom of the times to scent robes by laying them on bamboo frames over censers of incense.

kindled by our memories passing through the censor's lattice eyes – The embedded pun of *bi*, "fire," in *omobisbi ide*, "recall," brings the notions of heat and memories together. The openings in the censor and the bamboo frame are called *me*, "eyes," and Kanele uses it as a pun for his own eyes.

in the vale of Hemi in the country of Kai – An area in present-day Yamanashi Prefecture famous at that time for the production of fine horses for the court, and thus preparing the introduction of the string of images and vocabulary associated with horses.

the colt – Their son, Michitsuna.

kage dani miezu
arishi yori
utomo kokoro zo
tsuki someshi
tare ka yodzuma to
akashikemu
ikanaru tsumi no
omoki zo to
ifu ha kore koso
tsumi narashi
ima ha abukuma no
ahi mo mide
kakararu hito ni
kakarukashi
nani no ihaki no
mi naraneba
omofu kokoro mo
isamenu ni
ura no hamayufu
ikukasane
hedate hatetsuru
kara goromo
namida no kaha ni
sohotsu to mo
omohishi ideba
takimono no
kono me bakari wa
kawakinamu
kahi naki koto ha
kahi no kuni
hemi no mimaki ni
aruru uma wo
ikadeka hito ha
kaketomemu to
omofu mono kara
tarachine no
oya to shiruramu
katakahi no
koma ya kohitsutsu
inaka semu to
omofu bakari zo
ahare narubeki

Since that occasion, it is true
my heart did begin
to have cold feelings toward you.
Who then would see dawn
with the woman of one night?
What heavy load of
sin brings you to this pass, you ask?
I say, none other
than this complaining is your sin.
Do not wait to see
your father, right now, become bound
to someone unbound.
Yet, I am not like a tree
or rock, my feelings
for you, I cannot suppress.
Lay on layer
cotton grasses grow by the shore
betokening how we
ended up distant from each other.
Even if these layers
of Chinese robes are drenched
in a river of tears,
just lay them over the bamboo frame,
then the fragrant heat
kindled by our memories
passing through the censor's
lattice eyes would dry at least
these eyes of mine.
It is to no avail—
in the vale of Hemi
in the country of Kai,
there is a mare
grown so wild to her groom
one wonders
how could she ever be caught?
Then, what about the colt
who will know only his dam,
growing up one-sided,
yet, longing for his sire
will he not cry?
To the very degree I think on this,
I grow desolately sad.

and so on.

As the messenger was still there, I send this:

natsuku beki
hito mo hanateba

Let loose by the groom
who should care for her, the mare

Michinoku – This is an area in northern Japan also famous for horses, and since it is where her father is, it is appropriate as a reference to herself.

Right away comes back – The quickness of his reply gives a sense of the excitement of their exchange.

Colt of Obuchi – Obuchi in present-day Aomori Prefecture was associated in poetry with wild, uncontrollable horses.

unbridled colt – The word *koma*, "colt," is also a pun for "to come."

At Shirakawa Border – There were border checkpoints between the provinces in Heian Japan. One would pass through the Shirakawa Border if one were bringing a horse down to the capital from Michinoku Province in the north.

difficult going – This phrase contains the same pun as above, *koma*, "colt"/"come."

tryst on the seventh night – The seventh day of the seventh month was famous in Chinese legend as the night when the heavenly herdsboy and the weavermaid (thought to be the stars of Altair and Vega) were allowed to meet. They were separated for the rest of the year because they loved one another so much they neglected their work if they were together.

that place that I had thought so alarming – The Machi Alley woman's place.

trying every stratagem under heaven – Presumably these were efforts to draw Kaneie back to her. The author feels relieved because she knows the attempt will be in vain.

michinoku no
muma ya kagiri ni
naramu to suramu

of Michinoku
runs to the horizon's limit,
this must be the end, she thinks.

What must he have thought of it? Right away comes back:

ware ga na wo
wobuchi no koma no
areba koso
natsuku ni tsukanu
mi to mo shirareme

Just because my name
is the Colt of Obuchi
when I behave wildly,
did you think if you went to
tame me, I could not be caught?

And I reply:

koma uge ni
nari masari tsutsu
natsukenu wo
ko naha taezu zo
tanomi ki ni keru

To the unbridled colt
less and less inclined
to come this way,
is attached this little rope,
unbreakable it entreats you.

He replies:

Shirakaha no
seki no sekeba ya
koma ukute
amata no hi wo ba
hiki wataritsuru

At Shirakawa
Border, I've been stopped it seems,
difficult going,
for many days I have been
leading this north country colt.

There is a note with it, "I'll cross the border day after tomorrow."
It was the fifth day of the seventh month. And as it was around the time of
a long abstinence for him, I send back a reply like this:

ama no gaha
nanuka wo chigiru
kokoro araba
hoshi ahi bakari no
kage wo miyo to ya

If you have a mind
to tryst on the seventh night,
am I to think that
from now on we shall only meet
like the stars of heaven's river?

He seemed to think there was some justice in what I said and began to
treat me with a bit more consideration, and the months go by.

As for that place that I had thought so alarming, I was relieved to
hear that she was now frantically trying every stratagem under heaven.
While I was spending the time worrying myself to pieces, thinking, *I have
never known what to do about this relationship right from the start, as*

unbearable as it is, it must be the result of my own deplorable sins in a previous existence, and such, it so happened that having served as a lesser counselor for some years, he was promoted to the fourth rank and accordingly retired from his present position at court. In the next round of promotions, since he was given a position he did not particularly like as assistant to some stuffy sort of ministry, the world of affairs came to seem distasteful to him, and as there was nothing else for him to do but to visit here and there, he would come to stay leisurely for two or three days at a time with me.

One day, there comes this missive from His Highness, the prince, who was in charge of the ministry toward which my husband did not feel attracted:

midare i no tsukasa hitotsu ni narite shimo kuru koto no nado tae ni taruramu	Like scattered threads wound onto a single spool, we ended up in the same office, yet it seems that you would like to break those ties.
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His respectful reply:

tayu to ieba ito zo kanashiki kimi ni yori onaji tsukasa ni kuru kahi mo naku	When you say "break ties," How sad it makes me feel There is nothing to do but be wound together on the same spool of office.
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A response comes back right away:

natsuhiki no ito kotowari ya futa me mi me yori ariku ma ni hodo no furu ka mo	Traveling around to gather summer-spun thread for two skeins, three skeins, I understand perfectly how the time passes away.
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His respectful reply:

nana bakari ari mo koso sure natsu hiki no itoma ya ha naki hito me futa me ni	As numerous as seven are the skeins I have of summer-spun thread. How could I say I had no time were there only one or two?
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Again, from the prince:

he was promoted to the fourth rank – This was a significant promotion for Kaneie, who was thirty-four years old at the time. When she married him, he was fifth rank and captain of the Right Guards. In 956, he was promoted to the post of lesser counselor, still within the fifth rank. The position of lesser counselor was not one with great responsibilities but as part of the government office directly serving the emperor, it did allow access to the inner court and an opportunity to be in the presence of the emperor. With his promotion to the fourth rank, he was obliged to retire from his post as counselor. The promotion to the fourth rank was of major importance in the court hierarchy because it involved a significant increase in entitlements of income-producing land, servants, cloth, and other goods. It was a feature of the Heian court system that remuneration was based primarily on rank rather than office (McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 802, 829). Yet service in office was important for placing oneself in a position to be promoted in rank.

assistant to some stuffy sort of ministry – This is the War Ministry. The low esteem in which this ministry was held in the Heian period can be seen in the author's dismissive tone here and by Kaneie's own lack of interest in the post. Moreover, as his assigned post of assistant could be done by someone in the fifth rank, it is no wonder he found it distasteful. Thus, although the promotion in rank was welcome, his actual posting condemned him for the time being to political obscurity. Ironically, this low point in her husband's political career is actually one of the happiest periods in the marriage from her perspective.

the prince, who was in charge of the ministry – This is Prince Noriakira, who would have been about thirty-nine at the time. He was noted as a man of elegant tastes, being skilled in the composition of Chinese poetry and the playing of the koto. He was not, however, in the first circles of power as is indicated by his posting in the unpopular War Ministry. McCullough notes that the ministry "had little to do aside from choosing and rehearsing contestants for the Court's archery matches" (McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, 810). Nonetheless, Noriakira had the aura of royal prestige about him, which can be felt in the respectful tone the author reserves for him in the diary. This was one of the high points in the author's married life, when she is able to participate in her husband's playful and courtly correspondence with royalty.

Probably one of the reasons Kaneie wanted to have Michitsuna's Mother for a wife was her skill at poetry composition. He may actually have expected her not only to help him with the composition of poems for occasions like this interaction with the prince, but also to be the collector for his poems, creating just such a record as the following.

Like scattered threads – With this image, the prince introduces the textile motif that they spin out with elaborate wordplays on vocabulary associated with cloth, spinning, and weaving through the series of six poems. The following translations of the poems are quite free in an attempt to convey the playfulness in the exchange. The puns in this and the following poem are *tsukasa*, "office," containing *tsuka*, "spool," and *kuru*, "to come"/"wind on a spool."

summer-spun thread – *Natsuhiki*, "summer spun," is a pillow word for thread. This poem is founded on an allusion to a verse of a popular song, which puns on *me*, the word for wife and a weight measure for cloth: "Of white summer-spun thread, I have seven measures, let me weave them into robes and wear them as wives." The other pun in the verse is on *furu*, "to pass" (of time)/"to string the warp threads on a loom." I left this pun out of the translation.

As numerous as seven – Kaneie takes up the allusion to the popular song introduced in the previous poem by bringing in the number seven. He doesn't mean literally that he has seven wives.