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# How Strange! Are My Eyes Mistaken?": A Study of Arakida Reijo and Her Book of Fantastic Tales, Ayashi no yogatari

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"HOW STRANGE! ARE MY EYES MISTAKEN?": A STUDY OF ARAKIDA REIJO
AND HER BOOK OF FANTASTIC TALES, *AYASHI NO YOGATARI*

A Thesis Presented

by

MIRIAM KARAVIAS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
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of the requirement for the degree of

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Japanese Language, Literature, and Culture

"HOW STRANGE! ARE MY EYES MISTAKEN?":  A STUDY OF ARAKIDA REIJO
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ABSTRACT

"HOW STRANGE! ARE MY EYES MISTAKEN?": A STUDY OF ARAKIDA REIJO

AND HER BOOK OF FANTASTIC TALES, *AYASHI NO YOGATARI*

MAY 2015

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Arakida Reijo has been described as the most prolific female writer in Japanese premodern history, with her literary output encompassing a huge number of texts in a variety of genres. However, her works remain for the most part untranslated from the original classical Japanese, and she is almost a nonentity in modern literary academia. Given the widespread lack of female education in the Tokugawa period combined with the era's general image of male societal domination, an argument might be made for Reijo's inclusion in modern scholarship due to her status as an educated woman alone. However, Reijo's masterful handling of complicated plots, both interesting as entertainment and rewarding for further academic study, merits a place for her in the Japanese canon even apart from her rarity as an educated female author from the Tokugawa period.

As will be examined in this paper, Reijo's treatment of supernatural women in her 1778 collection of fantastic tales *Ayashi no yogatari*, or "Tales of the Uncanny," stands as an interesting departure from the often misogynistic themes in premodern Japanese

supernatural tales. Reijo's treatment of supernatural women becomes all the more

interesting when compared against traditional and contemporary literature, as rather than

attempting a complete reversal of ideas and motifs of her day, Reijo instead affects more

subtle but important changes. While the women in her stories still often lack agency and

interiority, and furthermore still play the role of the "monster," subject to supernatural

metamorphoses, Reijo's tales often lack both the ultimate judgement of these characters

and the subsequent didactic atmosphere present in so many similar tales. An analysis of

Reijo's tales in comparison with traditional and contemporary literature reveals the

uniqueness of her approach and its import in the Japanese literary tradition.

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**INTRODUCTION**


In 1776, Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734-1809) published a collection of short

ghostly stories entitled *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (Tales of Moonlight and Rain),

cementing himself within the Japanese literary tradition. He was a celebrity within his

lifetime, and his reputation has continued to flourish as readers across the globe read his

work for both academic pursuits and pleasure. Just two years later, Arakida Reijo 荒木田

麗女 (1732-1806) published her own collection of fantastic tales, *Ayashi no yogatari* 怪

世談 (Tales of the Uncanny), following in the trend that Akinari had so masterfully

brought to an apex. Reijo produced a great number of literary works beside this

collection; however, while she was not a complete nonentity, she not did seek publishing

for her works during her lifetime and did not enjoy the level of celebrity that her

contemporary Akinari did. It was not until poet Yosano Akiko 与謝野晶子 (1878-1942)

"rediscovered" Reijo in 1915 that she stood a chance to be recognized by academia.

Yosano herself expressed puzzlement over Reijo's lack of public recognition; however,

her biography and collection of Reijo's works did little to raise Reijo's esteem within

academia at large. Indeed, even today, although studies of Reijo have been increasing,

she is still relatively unknown, barely mentioned in literary surveys of the Tokugawa

period, and, outside of the works of scholars such as Atsuko Sakaki, especially

underrepresented in English-language studies.

With the passage of time, scholarship on Tokugawa era women writers has slowly

increased, with figures such as Nomura Bōtōni 野村望東尼 (1806-1867), Tadano

Makuzu 只野真葛 (1763-1825), and Ema Saikō 江馬細香 (1787-1861) in particular receiving more in-depth studies. However, they, like Reijo, often appear only as blips on the radar of academic surveys. It is impossible to simplify the issue of Reijo's persistent lack of recognition down to a simple oppressed-oppressor dichotomy. However, at least some of the fault for Reijo's relative lack of recognition may be traced back to traditional literary theory. Literature and literary history in Japan have long been colored by gendered meta-language. Not only are diction, sentence-structure, and style masculine or feminine, but periods of Japanese antiquity too have been gendered to fit an imposed narrative of literary history. Individuals inconvenient to this pattern have often been ignored or altered to match the schema. Again, the issue is not one of straightforward victim and victimizer. In different periods individuals have called for an end to gender as a basis for literary criticism, and changing times have led to different ways of relating to and interpreting texts. Nonetheless, this tradition of literary gender segregation cannot be ignored when considering the erasure of female artists and intellectuals, and Reijo stands as a prime example of the conveniently ignored or forgotten woman.

Furthermore, studies of minority authors often fall into the trap that the scholars themselves decry of considering an author only as a representative of the minority group he falls within, and studies of female Japanese authors are not exempt. In studying the concept of "women's literature" and "women writers" within Japan, Joan Ericson notes that, in tackling long-held ideas about female authors, Japanese feminists "reject the notion of a specific 'women's style' in modern literature."[1] Yet, simultaneously they often sequester female authors from the whole to criticize and compare these authors only

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[1] Ericson, *Be a Woman*, 7.

amongst themselves, effectively implying both an underlying similarity among women writers and a difference between them and male writers based only upon gender. Ericson argues that "efforts to reclaim this neglected history run the risk of segregating and distorting it…This persistence of addressing women writers as a group despite the absence of a specific 'women's style' raises…problems in reading a woman writer and assessing her work."[2] Of course, societal gender differences in Tokugawa Japan cannot be ignored – to do so would be to rob past women authors of their struggles. Furthermore, this is not to lessen the importance of lifting up previously smothered voices or rightfully lauding accomplishments achieved in the face of adversity. Nor is it to criticize, for example, gender-specific studies as a whole, but only a caution against the perpetuation of "othering" that insular studies might allow. Stereotyping must be avoided, especially when considering an author who does not fit the standardly prescribed mold presented by his or her society. Thus, in this paper I have striven to consider Reijo not just as a woman but as an author and unique individual, not disregarding her gender but neither attaching too much importance to it to the detriment of her life and character as a whole.

Information on Reijo is scarce, especially outside of difficult to decipher primary sources. Thus, in this present study, I bring together a variety of sources, at first perhaps seemingly unrelated, to consider Reijo and her work from multiple angles. In chapter one, I consider Reijo's own biography. It is difficult to create an accurate picture of the lives of women in the Tokugawa period, both because of their variety and the dearth of female-authored texts, but several scholars have compiled research on this question. I present their work to create a backdrop of Tokugawa women as a whole against which Reijo's

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[2] Ibid.

life is considered. Several different biographies have been consulted to compile a multi-faceted picture of Reijo. No major English language biography of Reijo exists, and the Japanese biographies were all written several years apart from each other, thus the individual authors' time periods, biases, and agendas are considered as much as possible when constructing this view on Reijo.

Chapter two continues forming a picture of the world Reijo lived and wrote in with an examination of her place and contemporaries. Apart from her travels – of which there were many – Reijo spent her life in Ise 伊勢, as a member of a Shinto priest family to the Ise Grand Shrine. Ise was a bustling cultural center during Reijo's time, doubtless aiding in her intellectual development. Furthermore, the nearby town of Matsuzaka 松坂 boasted Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) as a local celebrity, known throughout the country but still choosing to live in his provincial hometown. Although no evidence exists for a personal relationship between the pair, Reijo and Norinaga did interact through letters.[3] Their disagreement over literary matters marks an important event in Reijo's life, and further, although Norinaga's complaints against Reijo's literature might not be synonymous with complaints against her gender, his literary theories do provide an important starting point when considering Reijo's own lack of recognition in the Japanese literary tradition. Finally, I consider Reijo's lack of publishing, which stands in opposition to her vast literary output. Although one can only speculate on the reason why Reijo's texts were not published, the lack has doubtless had a strong effect on her perception in literary academia. At the end of chapter two, I again use Norinaga as a counterpoint against which to measure Reijo, for he stands as a commercially successful

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[3] Nenzi, *Excursions*, 105.

published author of the time, and furthermore lived outside of the "three capitals" of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto.

In chapter three, I move on to an examination of an antecedent literary form to which Reijo's work owes a clear debt, *setsuwa* 説話 (lit. "spoken story"). The definition of *setsuwa* as a genre has proven difficult for scholars since the introduction of the term, but in general they are fantastic or humorous tales with a didactic, often Buddhist, purpose dating from the late classical and early medieval periods. As similarly short fantastic tales, Tokugawa period *kaidan* 怪談 (ghost stories) – which I classify *Ayashi no yogatari* as – may be considered the logical outgrowth of *setsuwa*. Furthermore, Reijo would undoubtedly have considered herself as working within the tradition of *setsuwa* in writing *Ayashi no yogatari*, and her text has been even been labeled as such is some instances. At the very least, the influence of *setsuwa* on following genres is worthy of further study, especially considering the importance of women in both *setsuwa* and *kaidan*, and Reijo's own unique treatment of supernatural women and female transformation. Chapter three's examination of *setsuwa* and the concept of *fujōkan* 不浄 観 – the impurity of the human body predominantly focused on women and thus affecting their treatment in literature – will be used as a foundation to conduct an analysis of Reijo's own tales in chapter five.

Chapter four focuses on *kaidan* and Akinari. Firstly, an argument is made for *kaidan* as a genre term. Given the massive popularity of *kaidan* during the Edo period, is seems strange that the term is not included in traditional genre terminology when discussing Edo period literature. *Kaidan* refers to a specific type of story, seen as oral

tales, published texts, or *kabuki* 歌舞伎 plays, among other forms, which appear within a specific time period. Such stories draw upon literary antecedents and share notable characteristics between themselves. The argument for *kaidan* as a genre term, however, is deeply fraught, and it is simply beyond the bounds of this paper to allow it the proper consideration it deserves. Thus, I attempt at least to make an argument for my use of the term within the bounds of my own study. What few studies have been conducted upon *Ayashi no yogatari* have either neglected classifying it within a genre or offered consistently differing answers; however, given both the time period in which *Ayashi no yogatari* was written, its format, and its subject matter, *kaidan* stands as the logical answer to the question of genre in regard to Reijo's work. While Noriko Reider, for example, holds up Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari* as the epitome of *kaidan*, others consider the text purely as an important *yomihon* 読本 (lit. "reading book"). Certainly *kaidan* continued long after Akinari's work, gaining popularity on the *kabuki* stage in particular in the nineteenth century. However, whether or not Akinari truly stands as the master of *kaidan* is, for the purposes of this paper, immaterial. He was and is a famous author, and *Ugetsu monogatari* is undeniably a masterpiece which falls under the overarching category of *kaidan* texts; thus, Akinari and *Ugetsu* stand as convenient foils against which to measure Reijo and *Ayashi no yogatari*.

*Kaidan* was a major popular literary fad throughout the Edo period; thus, it is not unusual, given Reijo's taste for the foreign, ancient, and fantastic, that she too penned a collection of such otherworldly tales. It is Reijo's treatment of women, particularly supernatural women, in *Ayashi no yogatari*, however, that marks her work as atypical. This, along with a detailed literary analysis of two of the tales from Reijo's work, "The

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Savage with the Flying Head" and "Floating Weeds," makes up the subject matter of

chapter five. In Tokugawa Japan, women were regularly associated with, among other

things, the cardinal sin of jealousy, to the point that the trait is even often described as a

uniquely feminine failing. In Akinari's "The Blue Hood," the main character, Kaian, is

surprised to hear of a local priest turned demon who is terrorizing the countryside, stating,

"But all of these cases are about women. Probably because of the malice in their nature

females readily turn into vicious demons. I've never heard of any example involved in a

man."[4] He blames the priest's transformation on "past karma," rather than the kind of

inborn flaw women possess, as before the priest fell into the lust that eventually

consumed him, he was "the ideal priest." In the end, with Kaian's help, the priest is able

to return to the path of righteousness and achieve enlightenment. Furthermore, in the

opening of "The Cauldron of Kibitsu," Akinari's narrator rails against the "poison of

jealousy" in a wife, claiming that she will bring destruction great and small onto her

husband and household. He claims that husbands must always guard their own behavior

and educate their wife, for "when a jealous woman dies, she may become a serpent. She

can wreak her fury with a thunderbolt...If a man is overcome by some capricious whim

and arouses his wife's jealous nature, he may end up doing harm to himself."[5]

Reijo's tales offers no such direct moralizing, and moreover, her ambiguous

treatment of supernatural women as a whole differs from that of her contemporaries, as

will be discussed in more detail in chapter five. However, although certainly an unusual

and outstanding woman in her age who was affected by cultural biases both during and

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[4] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 189.

[5] Ibid, 149.

after her life, Reijo's writings in *Ayashi no yogatari* do not reflect the revolutionary spirit of a woman seeking to overturn the status quo, but rather the skill of an intellectual excelling in an art form which society believed her incapable of. She is certainly not exempt from the standards and biases of her culture. As a member of a Shinto priest family, Reijo sought to distance herself from Buddhist moralistic pedantry in *Ayashi no yogatari*, but such influences are nevertheless evident in her work, though admittedly not to the same degree as many of her contemporaries. From especially the medieval period onward, Japanese Buddhism held a particularly negative view towards women, a view which, combined with the patriarchal ideology of Confucianism which travelled over from the continent during this period, suffused Japanese culture. Thus, Reijo's ambiguously sympathetic treatment of women, particularly supernatural women, reflects an important departure from the norm, all the more important because it is not a direct reversal of common sensibility of the time, but a more nuanced and unique approach, reflective of Reijo's own unusual circumstances – highly educated, but still a woman subject to the biases against femininity of her day, and thus not truly fitting in with either gender.

# CHAPTER 1

# A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ARAKIDA REIJO

In the constructed view of Japanese literary history, the Heian period is known for its female writers, while the Tokugawa period is characterized by male figures. As time passes, a few Tokugawa female authors have come to light, Arakida Reijo among them. Although claimed by Furuya Tomoyoshi 古谷知新, compiler of an important Taishō era collection of Tokugawa period women's literature, *Edo jidai joryū bungaku zenshū* 江戸時代女流文学全集, as "the most prolific woman writer of all time in Japan,"[6] little modern scholarship exists on Reijo. A woman of a Shinto priest family, Reijo lived in the town of Ise, and wrote in a wide variety of genres, including both poetry and prose. Placing Reijo in her historical context by examining her time, place, and contemporaries will not only shed light on a woman long ignored by academia and elucidate the atmosphere in which she lived and wrote, but also might help to answer the question of why she has so long languished in obscurity.

## 1.1 Women in Tokugawa Japan

There can be little disagreement that women in Tokugawa Japan were as a class subordinate to men; however, the extent of their subordination in the reality of everyday life has proven a topic of much debate. While previous theories embraced the image of the oppressed Tokugawa woman – where societal moralistic teachings and everyday reality matched – more recent studies have posited a more nuanced and in some ways

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[6] Furuya, "Shogen," 1. Translation by Atsuko Sakaki in *Obsessions*, 115.

positive view of women's lives. However, as research has revealed, the question of women's status in Tokugawa Japan is not one with an easy answer, and in reality both extremes in opinion, positive and negative, might be true depending on a variety of factors.

In her essay "Evolution of the Feminine Ideal," published in the 1976 collection *Women in Changing Japan*, Joy Paulson argues that "the traditional image of Japanese women has evolved, while the status of women has devolved, in response to the influences of Buddhism, Confucianism, and the Samurai ethic."[7] She claims that in prehistorical Japan, women held a more exalted, or at least equitable, status, as evidenced by the active role of female figures in texts such as the *Nihongi* 二本紀 (The Chronicles of Japan), but the encroachment of Chinese patriarchal values from the mainland led to women's gradual displacement and subjugation in Japanese society. History saw the gradual abasement of women until the Tokugawa era, which marked the ultimate codification of women's inferior roles.[8] Misogyny in medieval Japanese society flowed both from Buddhism – which negated women's chance for salvation as women and labeled them as "agents of the devil sent to prevent men from following the way of Buddha"[9] – and, according to Paulson, the martial atmosphere of the times, in which men were simply valued above physically weaker women. The codification of women's roles

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[7] Paulson, "Evolution," 1.

[8] Ibid, 1-2.

[9] Ibid, 9.

in society in the early Tokugawa era stemmed from a desire of the ruling Tokugawa

shogunate to establish a system that preserved the status quo.[10]

Paulson claims that in the Tokugawa period women were legally completely

dependent upon the men in their lives, and were eager to please so as to avoid divorce,

which would leave them economically stranded. She further argues that Confucian ethics

barred women from learning, even quoting a Tokugawa official stating, "It is well that

women should be unlettered. To cultivate women's skills would be harmful. They have

no need of learning."[11] Furthermore, according to Gail Bernstein, the question of proper

female behavior long held the minds of intellectuals in Japan:

> "Far from being invisible or ignored, Japanese women have captured the
> attention of moralists and the state for well over three hundred years. With
> their gender roles publicly prescribed, scrutinized, lauded, or condemned
> in government edicts, law codes, moral tracts, slogans, short stories,
> theatrical performance, folk tales, family histories, magazines, and films,
> Japanese women have never been without clear role models. Put another
> way, they have never been left alone."[12]

*Onna daigaku* 女大学 (Greater Learning for Women) was a quintessential moral

text in establishing women's societal roles in Tokugawa society, being widely read across

class barriers, and has been used by scholars to support the view of the oppressed women

in preindustrial Japan. Written in the early eighteenth century and credited to the Neo-

Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekken (1631-1714), *Onna daigaku* preaches on topics such as

a woman's proper role within her house and family, her relationship with her in-laws and

husband, and the sins intrinsic to women which lead to their inherent inferiority to men.

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[10] Ibid, 9-10.

[11] Ibid, 12.

[12] Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women*, 14

According to the text, a woman's nature is one of "indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness," and as such "it is incumbent on her, in every particular, to distrust herself and to obey her husband." A woman should respect and obey her in-laws in all things, and never speak against them, even in rightful defense of herself, and she must "serve [her husband] with all worship and reverence," for "the great lifelong duty of a woman is obedience."[13] The text also advises women on the seven reasons her husband might seek to divorce her, including "disobedience, infertility, and talkativeness;" as Yokota Fuyuhiko notes, *Onna daigaku* "encapsulates the discourse that subordinates women to their husbands (and/or their houses) and entraps them within the home."[14]

However, Yokota is quick to point out that assuming a static societal position for women throughout the entirety of the two and a half century long Tokugawa period is foolish. She further argues that *Onna daigaku*, originally published as part of *Onna daigaku takara bako* 女大学宝箱(A Treasure Chest of Great Learning for Women), has long been taken out of context when considered alone, as it instead exists as a part of a larger text that teaches not only women's roles within a family but also provides literary and artistic education – including sections of *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji) and the *Hyakunin isshu* 百人一首 – basic medical training, and information on childrearing, among other topics.[15] In her essay, "Imagining Working Women in Early Modern Japan," Yokota attempts to reconcile the two ideas of Tokugawa women – were they downtrodden and oppressed as the official doctrine suggests or important

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[13] Ibid, 11.

[14] Yokota, "Imagining Working Women," 153.

[15] Ibid, 155.

contributors in an agrarian-based system in which the survival of the family trumped all other concerns?

Due to the largely homogeneous character of Japanese society, Japanese women's experiences have traditionally been defined by socioeconomic class and age rather than other distinguishing factors such as religion. The household, generally headed by a man although woman headship was not unheard of, was the site of both productive and reproductive labor in pre-industrial Japan. Furthermore, the survival of the household, more than the well-being of any individual member, was held in utmost importance, and thus in seeking to preserve the household, other considerations, such as a woman's proper place and behavior, might be neglected for the good of the whole.[16] Every member of the family worked for the survival of the household. A bride's primary job, then, was to care for the well-being of her husband's household, a responsibility that often took the form of productive over reproductive labor. Confucian principles at the time spoke to the moral disingenuousness of women and thus disapproved of a mother taking too active a role in childrearing.[17] As such, a bride generally performed important productive work within the household – cooking, cleaning, sewing, weaving, side-crafts, et cetera – with other members of the family aiding in reproductive work when possible to free up her time. Tasked with maintaining harmony within the family, the bride as wife and daughter-in-law was in many ways more important than in her role as a mother.[18] According to Anne Walthall in her essay "The Life Cycle of Farm Women in Tokugawa Japan," while the

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[16] Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women*, 23-25.

[17] Ibid 4.

[18] Ibid 57-58.

upper classes perhaps clung to official doctrine more fiercely, "among the peasantry women held a more equitable position;"[19] they performed invaluable work for the household which perhaps earned them more respect than otherwise believed.

Furthermore, not every woman lived as a wife and mother. Ema Saikō, Tadano Makuzu, and Nomura Bōtōni, among others, all stand alongside Arakida Reijo as examples of intellectual women in the Tokugawa period. Among other scholars, Laura Nenzi, for example, has done work on Nomura Bōtōni, as has Betinna Gramlich-Oka on Tadano Makuzu.[20] Ema Saikō has received the most attention among Tokugawa female intellectuals, with much being due to the foundational work conducted by Hiroaki Sato and Kado Reiko among others.[21] In her essay, "Female *Bunjin*:  The Life of Poet-Painter Ema Saikō," Patricia Fister claims Saikō as "one of the finest Chinese-style poets and painters active in nineteenth-century Japan."[22] Sakaki too includes a study on Saikō in her book *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature*, alongside her work on Reijo. Both Sakaki and Fister highlight the unconventional-ness of Saikō's life as an independent female artist which on the one hand paved the way for her success, but on the other provoked isolation from other women and birthed dissatisfaction in Saikō over the "road not taken" of conventional marriage and childbirth.[23]

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[19] Ibid, 58.

[20] See Nenzi's "Portents and Politics:  Two Women Activists on the Verge of the Meiji Restoration" and Gramlich-Oka's *Thinking Like a Man:  Tadano Makuzu (1763-1825)* for examples of these scholars' work.

[21] For examples of these scholars' work, see Hiraoki Sato's *Breeze Through Bamboo:*  Kanshi *of Ema Saikō* and Kado Reiko's *Ema Saikō:  kaseiki no joryū shijin* 江馬細香：化政期の女流詩人.

[22] Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women*, 108.

[23] Ibid 128-129. Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 125-126.

The picture of Tokugawa women that emerges from these studies is multifaceted. The idea of strict, unbending misogyny seems overly simplistic to cover the vast span of the Tokugawa period and the myriad circumstances of different classes and different regions. On the other hand, in trying to combat the too simplistic negative view of Tokugawa women, scholars run the risk of running too far in the other direction, holding up individual cases as representative of the whole, highlighting the exceptions rather than the norm. Ema Saikō is reported to have met twenty-two female artists during her lifetime, collecting examples of their works together in a single handscroll, which stands as a "rare testament to the women active in nineteenth-century artistic circles in Japan."[24] However, the existence of female artists does not negate the generally lower status of their fellow women, just as the occasional breaking of a rule does not negate the existence of the rule itself. Buddhist and Confucianist philosophy, which formed the underpinning of Tokugawa society, did both teach misogynistic doctrine, doctrine that was generally embraced across classes for all that it might not influence every facet of behavior in every situation. Thus, rather than privileging one view of Tokugawa women over the other, it is important to hold both in tandem when attempting to make judgments on such a varied and ill-chronicled facet of history. In the end, as Walthall states, it is impossible to make sweeping statements about all Tokugawa women:  "The view that emerges from available sources suggests that, like all people who shape their lives around the rhythms of agricultural cycle, Japanese peasants were accustomed to responding flexibly to the vagaries of their existence."[25] The reality of life for women in the

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[24] Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women*, 130.

[25] Ibid 43.

Tokugawa period seems to lie somewhere in the middle between oppression and equality, where immediate concerns sometimes trump but never erase ideology, and doctrine and everyday practice are not opposites but mutual influences.

## 1.2 Textual Background on the Consulted Biographies of Reijo

Yosano Akiko compiled the first modern biography on Reijo in her 1915 collection *Tokugawa jidai joryū bungaku Reijo shōsetsushū* 徳川時代女流文学麗女小説集, in which she also included a selection of Reijo's works. Another similar text, Furuya Tomoyoshi's *Edo jidai joryu□ bungaku zenshu□* 江戸時代女流文学全集, followed soon after in 1918, including examples of Reijo's work alongside those of other authors. These two texts mark the first publishing of Reijo's texts and the last until Izuno Tatsu's compilation *Arakida Reijo monogatari shūsei* 荒木田麗女物語集成, published in 1982, the last and only complete collection of Reijo's body of work. Yosano based her biography of Reijo on Reijo's own autobiography *Keitoku Reijo ikō* 慶徳麗女遺稿 and the writings of the scholar Isobe Hyakuzō 磯部百三 who lived in the same town as Reijo. However Yosano admits that she herself had not read all of Reijo's many writings – although she must have worked from original texts as her book contains pictures of the manuscripts, and she states that the originals were all written only in *kana* (Japanese script) to which she added the appropriate *kanji* (Chinese characters) in her transcription – and thus the information she presents is incomplete.[26]

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[26] Yosano, "Shōsetsu-shū," 4-5.

Following Japanese language biographies, such as those by Kado Reiko (published in 1998) and Izuno Tatsu (1969) and the timeline compiled by Senda Yasuko (1956), clearly reference the Yosano version, some sentences being similar if not completely identical across the texts, but each does present slightly different information.[27] Thus, data has been compiled from all of these sources plus several others in an effort to create the most truthful representation of Reijo. Furthermore, each of the four main biographies examined here present different emotional takes on Reijo, an important fact to consider, along with the context and time period in which each biography was written, when attempting to compile an accurate representation of the details of Reijo's life. Two important facts to contemplate, for example, are why each author chose the still academically underrepresented Reijo as the focus of their studies and how they individually reacted to Reijo's lack of modern literary recognition.

For example, Yosano seems to be the most impassioned in her defense of Reijo and emotionally connected to her, describing more personal and less factual details, such as how as a young girl Reijo "could only enviously watch her elder brother Takeyo leave for the Shrine school every morning with his books in his pocket," being forbidden to attend herself.[28] In contrast, the later texts, whether by nature of the format such as with Senda's timeline or simply a later style of writing and scholarship, tend to present a much less emotional view of Reijo. Izuno expresses her respect for Reijo as a woman writer who "stood shoulder to shoulder with men," and describes her as "a pioneer" in the

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[27] The readings of names often differ from text to text, but for consistency's sake, the readings used by Yosano Akiko have been used in this paper when available.

[28] Ibid, 1-2.

Tokugawa period,[29] but tends to focus tightly on the facts of Reijo's life and writing, not making the same kind of impassioned call for Reijo's inclusion in modern scholarship that Yosano does. On the other hand, Kado, writing in 1998, similar to like Yosano begins her text with a metaphor implicitly calling for an end to Reijo's long academic banishment, although she too approaches the author in less emotional terms. She compares Reijo to a shrine hidden deep within a forest. Just as there are no roads or people in the forest, and no axe has ever touched any of the overgrown tightly-spaced trees, so too has Reijo been abandoned in modern academia, the "light of literary criticism" not yet reaching her plethora of works.[30]

Little English language research exists on Reijo, with the exception of the work by Atsuko Sakaki, to whom this paper is greatly indebted. Moreover, in general, the English language studies that do exist offer less detailed accounts of Reijo's life and often only as an aside to the true intent of the text. As such they tend toward describing overarching or noteworthy facts as opposed to the minutely detailed work of the previously mentioned Japanese scholars. Again, however, all of the works mentioned are clearly indebted to Yosano's foundational scholarship.

Yosano begins her biography by decrying how Reijo has been ignored in academia at large. In Reijo she paints a picture of a heroic woman who belonged in the Heian period, but was born instead in the Tokugawa period, a society which attempted to suppress her personality and intellect. Nevertheless, Reijo overcame the societal restrictions placed upon her, unwilling to "rot among the masses of uneducated women

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[29] Izuno, "Arakida Reijo," 122.

[30] Kado, *Hakken*, 114.

like a weed."[31] Thus she forged her own happiness through learning and the literary arts.

Reijo studied Japanese, Chinese, and Buddhist literature – her extensive education

evident in her complex and plot-driven works – and wrote *haikai* 俳諧 (comic linked

poetry), *shōsetsu* 小説 (novels), *rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語 (historical fictions), *waka*

和歌 (Japanese poetry), *kanshi* 漢詩 (Chinese poetry), *kanbun* 漢文 (Chinese prose),

*zuihitsu* 随筆 (miscellaneous essays),[32] *kikō* 紀行 (travelogues),[33] and fantasies,[34] and

besides writing drew pictures, played the *koto* 琴 (Japanese 13-stringed zither), practiced

calligraphy, and was accomplished in the female arts of entertainment.[35]

It is no wonder Yosano attempts to "recommend her to the world," asserting that

outside of the Heian period, it would be difficult to find an author as accomplished as

Reijo. Yosano claims that she even tops Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (c.978 – c.1014/1025)

in terms of "energy and vitality," being in that aspect the best author in Japanese history.

She further states that Reijo bests Kyokutei Bakin in breadth of works, and that her

"elegant writing" is better than any other authors' of the modern period. The only

negative point Yosano makes against Reijo is Reijo's proclivity towards writing about the

ancient and the foreign rather than the contemporary and personal, which rendered her

thus unable to measure up to Murasaki Shikibu in terms of capturing the subtleties of

human emotion: "In other words, Reijo did not grasp the realism of *Genji monogatari*,

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[31] Yosano, "Shōsetsu-shū," 1.

[32] Ibid, 1-2.

[33] Nenzi, *Excursions*, 218.

[34] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 115.

[35] Yosano, "Shōsetsu-shū," 1.

but instead was entranced with the fantasy of *Utsuho monogatari*"[36] – an annotated

edition of which Reijo actually produced.[37]

Although Yosano's portrait of Reijo is perhaps a bit exaggerated in both Reijo's

merits and the struggles she faced as an educated woman in the Tokugawa period,

nevertheless her contributions to research on Reijo have been invaluable and provided a

foundation for likely all later studies. While today Reijo is still underrepresented in

literary scholarship, she is not a complete unknown, and Yosano's work undoubtedly

paved the way for Reijo to hopefully one day receive the recognition she deserves.


## 1.3 Biography of Arakida Reijo

Reijo (sometimes Rei 麗 or Reiko 麗子), was born Taka (隆) in Ise Yamada

Shimonaka no Gōmachi 伊勢山田下中之郷町 on March 10, 1732 (Kyōhō 享保 17)[38] to

a family of Shinto priests at the Ise Inner Shrine (*naikū* 内宮). She was also known by the

pseudonyms Shisan 紫山 and Seisho 清渚,[39] which were bestowed to her by her *renga*

teachers, the characters a reference to Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon 清少納言

(c.966 – c.1017/1025) respectively.[40] Her birth-father's name was Arakida Taketō 荒木

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[36] Yosano, "Shōsetsu-shū," 2-3.

[37] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 118.

[38] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 93.

[39] Hanji and Haruno, *Kinsei joryū*, 203.

[40] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 117.

田武遠,[41] and she was the last of five children in the family and the only daughter. From a young age Reijo watched her brothers at their studies, eschewing more properly feminine activities. At seven-years-old, Reijo wished to enter the school at the Ise Grand Shrine, but her parents did not approve of her academic leanings, believing education to be of little use for woman. Reijo's natural academic leanings would not be stymied, however, and her brothers fostered her talents, studying with her and lending her learning materials. One brother, Masatomi 正富, for example, lent her a copy of *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (The Tales of Ise) and the preface to *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (the first of the imperial *waka* anthologies), and thus Reijo began learning to read and write without the use of the normal *iroha* poem.[42]

Under her brothers' tutelage, Reijo practiced her written characters and studied Chinese works such as *The Analects of Confucius*. Around the age of nine, she hoped to become a disciple of the local Confucian scholar Usuda Nanzan 臼田南山, but once again, her parents balked at the idea of their daughter pursuing such a masculine art and forbid it. At twelve, at the behest of her parents, Reijo began studying more feminine arts as well, such as the *koto*, but never truly applied herself to them as she did to the masculine arts.[43] In 1744, at thirteen, Reijo was adopted by her uncle, Arakida Taketomo 荒木田武隅, also known as Kamaya Gonnoshin 釜屋權之進, a priest at the Outer Ise Shrine (*gekū* 外宮), who had no children of his own and whose wife had died some time before that. Although at first Taketomo shared Reijo's birth parents' hesitation about his

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[41] Kado, *Hakken*, 114.

[42] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 1.

[43] Izuno, "Arakida Reijo," 105.

adopted daughter's inclination towards learning, in her adopted father Reijo ultimately found a parent much more open-minded to the idea of a woman undertaking formal education. She learned sewing from Taketomo's female servant, and was able to continue her formal education, studying both *kanshi* and *waka*.[44]

Reijo began composing poetry at fifteen,[45] and began learning *renga*, the poetry form she would truly excel at, at sixteen. Reijo's brothers recommended *renga* to her, and her brother Masanori 正紀 originally served as her teacher.[46] At seventeen she became the student of the *renga* master Nishiyama Shōrin 西山昌林 who lived in Osaka.[47] As Nishiyama's disciple, Reijo devoted her energy to *haikai*, and after two years received Nishiyama's formal certification of proficiency.[48] Nishiyama even praised her literary talent.[49] At twenty-one years old, Reijo traveled to Kyoto with Masanori and became a pupil of Satomura Shōteki 里村昌廸, her brother's *renga* teacher – the Satomura family being a lineage that had served the shogunate as *renga* poets for generations[50] – and once again devoted her time fully to the art. Female *renga* poets were rare, and Reijo's literary ability endeared her to Shōteki.[51] Sakaki postulates that Reijo's success in the genre stemmed from her ability to connect stanzas, so important in *renga*, and build an

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[44] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 2.

[45] Izuno, "Arakida Reijo," 105.

[46] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 2.

[47] Kado, *Hakken*, 115.

[48] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 2.

[49] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 97.

[50] Kado, *Hakken*, 115.

[51] Izuno, "Arakida Reijo," 106.

"overarching structure" rather than to her style. She further argues that Reijo's ability in *renga* over other forms of poetry points to her "communicative" nature and her desire to "develop[e] sequences" rather than "captur[e] a single theme."[52]

In 1753, at age twenty-two, Reijo married Kasai Ietada 笠井家雅.[53] Izuno Tatsu writes his surname as Yoshishige 慶滋 and claims that the year of Reijo's marriage may have been 1754.[54] Yosano, however, writes his Ietada's surname as Keitoku 慶徳,[55] the same as Reijo's autobiography. She further states that Reijo's own writings about the years between age twenty and age thirty are unclear, and that Reijo lists no specific date for her marriage.[56] That decade was apparently difficult for Reijo, who suffered both illness and financial difficulties.[57] Her adoptive father Taketomo and her brother Masanori died in 1754, as did her *renga* master Shōrin, leaving Reijo as the only *haikai* poet in the Yamada area and thus attracting many *haikai* poets to visit her. In 1759, her birth father Taketō also died.[58]

Ietada, however, would prove to be a kind and loving husband, yet another man in Reijo's life who supported her literary activities. According to Sakaki, Ietada wrote out manuscript copies of Reijo's works and checked out books for Reijo to read from the

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[52] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 117.

[53] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 98.

[54] Izuno, "Arakida Reijo," 106.

[55] Sakaki mentions both "Keitoku" and "Yoshishige" as possible surnames for Ietada in *Obsessions*, but provides no kanji.

[56] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 3.

[57] Hanji and Haruno, *Kinsei joryū*, 204.

[58] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 98-99.

library at the Ise Grand Shrine, and contemporaries of the pair commented upon their

close relationship.[59] Being bookish himself, Ietada understood Reijo's desire to learn, and

it was on his advice that she eventually travelled to Kyoto to become the disciple of

*renga* master Satomura Shōho 里村紹甫 in 1762. At this point in her life Reijo began to

focus on the medieval period and Chinese texts as inspiration for her Heian-style

novels.[60] In 1764, Reijo changed her name from "Taka" to "Rei," signing her name as

"Rei," "Reiko," or "Reijo," and the next year she and her husband returned to Ise from

Kyoto. Thus began the literary production period of Reijo's life, who finished thirteen

works in 1771 alone. Between 1770 and 1779, Senda's timeline focuses almost

exclusively on the works Reijo completed.[61] Furthermore, in her text, Yosano attributes

forty-nine works, mostly long multi-volume texts, to Reijo, though that number does not

include her poetry or shorter prose works.

 As stated, from 1765 on, Reijo's life became primarily about writing and

travelling. According to Sakaki, she is even sometimes categorized as a *chojutsuka* 著述

家 or "professional writer" because of the multiplicity of genres she wrote within and the

high number of texts she authored.[62] At thirty-seven years old, Reijo began studying

*kanshi* under Emura Hokkai 江村北海 (1713-1788) of Kyoto.[63] Hokkai himself, author

of several texts, among them *Nihon shishi* 日本詩史 (A History of Chinese Poetry in

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[59] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 117.

[60] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 3.

[61] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 100-104.

[62] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 115.

[63] Yosano, "Arakida Reijo shōden," 10-12.

Japan), was a famous poet and critic of the day, and besides teaching Reijo *kanshi* also authored the preface to her novel *Ike no mokuzu* 池の藻屑 (Weeds in the Pond).[64] The rather infamous scholarly argument between Reijo and *kokugakusha* 国学者 (scholar of National Learning) Motoori Norinaga, which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter, occurred in 1780. In 1782, Reijo, now fifty-one years old, and Ietada adopted a five-year-old child, and Reijo's literary output dropped significantly after that. Ietada passed away in 1791, and Reijo's last work was completed in 1804, just two years before her death in 1806.[65]

Reijo's life is one of accomplishment, from constantly seeking education in her youth, to her vast travels and impressive literary output in her adulthood. She stands as an inspiring individual on her own merits, and her reputation is only enhanced by biases against her gender that she was required to strive against. Although Reijo seems to have been surrounded by supportive men who encouraged her academic and literary pursuits, nevertheless she must have faced some backlash for her difficult and logical "masculine" genres in which she wrote, going directly against the image of women and proper femininity as emotional and spontaneous. Furthermore, although womanhood and motherhood were not necessarily synonymous in the Tokugawa period as Bernstein notes,[66] nevertheless, Reijo and Ietada's married life broke somewhat with the traditionally-styled household. Reijo long pursued her own interests with Ietada's support, and the pair did not seek to produce an heir until well past middle age. On the other hand, Reijo seems to have accomplished what Ema Saikō mourned the loss of: married life and

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[64] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 116-117.

[65] Senda, "Arakida Reijo nenpu," 104-109.
[66] Bernstein, *Recreating Japanese Women*, 3-4.

motherhood, untraditional as it may have been, lived in conjunction with pursuit of her

literary goals rather than in opposition.

# CHAPTER 2

# REIJO'S WORLD:  HER PLACE AND CONTEMPORARIES

Daughter of a Shinto priest family serving at the Ise Grand Shrine and later married to another Shinto priest, Reijo was born and subsequently lived the majority of her life in the town of Ise. Ise was a bustling cultural center in Reijo's time, a fact that no doubt aided in Reijo's intellectual development as it granted her exposure to a variety of people and opportunities to engage with other intellectuals. For example, Reijo engaged in a well-documented intellectual dispute with preeminent *kokugaku* scholar Motoori Norinaga who hailed from the nearby town of Matsuzaka. Norinaga was a successful scholar both during and after his lifetime; although he lived outside of the "three capitals" – Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo – his works were widely published and students from across the country travelled to Matsuzaka to study with him. Although according to current evidence, Reijo herself never sought publication for her works, an examination of Norinaga – both as a scholar whose view of literature held important repercussions for Reijo and her writing and as a published author successful both in his own time and posthumously – is undertaken in this chapter to further consider the world Reijo wrote in, the biases she had to contend with, and possibilities that existed for authors in her time and place.

## 2.1 Ise

Apart from her travels, Reijo spent most of her life in Ise. The town of Ise was primarily a religious center, home of the *Ise jingū* 伊勢神宮, or Ise Grand Shrine,

dedicated to the worship of one of the primary Shinto deities and legendary progenitor of the Japanese imperial line, the sun goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami. In early Japanese history, around the fifth and sixth centuries the people of the Yamato region established dominance over the islands, and the leading family of the Yamato people, the modern imperial line, claimed descendancy from Amaterasu in an attempt to secure dominance. They then formed connections with the shrine at Ise to further reinforce and legitimatize their reign, embroiling the Grand Shrine and its image in imperial politics. As such, Ise plays an important role in the both the mythos and the history of Japan.[67]

The architecture of Ise has long been cherished within Japan for "the great beauty of its simple forms, its unique style, and its ancient heritage."[68] The shrine is also famous for its "periodic reconstruction tradition" known as the *shikinen sengu* 式年遷宮 or more simply *sengu*, in which the structures of the shrine are rebuilt in adjacent locations every twenty years using techniques passed down since the tradition's inception in *circa* 690. Other shrines hold similar rebuilding traditions, though the practice was more strongly adhered to in premodern Japan, but Ise's is the most renown. Furthermore, while other shrines' *sengu* traditions likely emerged naturally out of both a need for structural maintenance and a desire to show respect to the enshrined deity, Ise's *sengu* was ordered by imperial edict, once again pointing to the complicated and intertwining political and mythical history of the shrine.[69]

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[67] Reynolds, "Modernist Construction," 316.

[68] Adams, "Reconstruction," 39

[69] Ibid, 49-50.

Ise has always been a famous site for religious pilgrimages, and this was even more true in the Tokugawa period when the government heavily restricted travel, and thus people used the excuse of pilgrimages, one of the few forms of travel allowed, to travel for pleasure.[70] The famous Buddhist poet Saigyō 西行 (1118-1190) visited in the twelfth century and composed several poems about the area, increasing the allure of Ise as a sight-seeing location and further cementing its place in poetic tradition. Furthermore, in the Edo period, Ise's extensive network of disciples combined with its agents who travelled around the country worked to increase pilgrimages to the shrine, the number of which rose drastically in this period: on the average year in the Edo period between two hundred thousand and five hundred thousand pilgrims visited the Grand Shrine, and in 1705, 1777, and 1830 in particular "Ise pilgrimage reached a fever pitch," resulting in over five million visitors in 1830 alone.[71]

In response to this boom of traffic in and out of Ise, the market for souvenirs relating to Ise, especially visual representations such as the religiously symbolic Ise Mandala or more immediately practical guidebooks to the area, expanded, though most texts were likely created and published far from Ise itself. Although the ostensible reason for travel to Ise was religious pilgrimage, the guidebooks forewent the artifice almost entirely and included more secular material, such as information on the local specialties and famous historical sites. Furthermore, the popularity of Ise as a travel destination stimulated the local economy, encouraging various merchants and other businesses to set up shop in the hopes of profiting off of the travel-hungry pilgrims. Jonathan Reynolds

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[70] Reynolds, "Modernist Construction," 319.
[71] Ibid, 316-318.

points out that the irony of the "this-worldly activities that surrounded the shrine precincts" was not lost on "contemporary commentators," citing as an example Ihara Saikaku's 井原西鶴 (1642-1693) *Five Women Who Loved Love*, in which none of the protagonists visiting Ise even attempt to pay their respects at the holy Inner Shrine.[72]

Although the resultant commercial atmosphere that the swarms of pilgrims brought to Ise was perhaps not beneficial to the religious solemnity expected of such an important shrine, the development of the area as a whole was greatly accelerated, and in the eighteenth century Ise flourished as a small cultural center. Reijo's developing literary leanings undoubtedly benefited from the intellectualism of the area, centered around two large schools headed respectively by Motoori Norinaga and Arakida Hisaoyu 荒木田久老 (1747-1804),[73] a priest at the Ise Inner Shrine, both students of the great Kamo no Mabuchi 賀茂真淵 (1697-1769).[74] As previous stated, while not personally acquainted, Reijo and Norinaga were known to have disputed over literary matters, Norinaga disapproving of the obvious Sinitic influence in her stories, and Reijo, angered by his unsolicited revisions to her story "Nonaka no shimizu,"[75] calling him "a country bumpkin, a phony student."[76] This tiff with Norinaga highlights Reijo's overarching disagreement with the *kokugakusha*, who valued an aesthetic of "transparency,

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72 Ibid, 318-319.

[73] Nenzi, *Excursions*, 105.

[74] Teeuwen, *Essay of Split Bamboo*, 1.

[75] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 153.

[76] Sakaki, *Obsession*, 119.

immediacy, and indigenousness"[77] that Reijo's literature, so indebted to the ancient and

the foreign, did not display. Reijo excelled at handling complicated plots and a

multiplicity of characters, a skill far removed from the emotional interiority valued in the

traditionally feminine *nikki* (diary) genre. In fact, *nikki* was one genre that Reijo did not

dabble in, instead preferring to direct her literary gaze far outward rather than inward,

embracing an aesthetic in direct opposition to that favored by the *kokugakusha*.

## 2.2 Motoori Norinaga

The academic tiff between Motoori Norinaga and Reijo marks a highlight of

Reijo's career, although there is no evidence to suggest the pair even met in person,

disputing instead through letters. Norinaga himself bears further study in an examination

of Reijo's life, firstly because of his interactions with Reijo and the importance of his

academic stance both in the context of said interactions and as an important paradigm in

Japanese literary academia. Moreover, as a famous published scholar of the time in Ise

province, Norinaga offers a glimpse into Reijo's contemporary society and its views of

authors, writing, and publishing. Although Reijo never sought publishing herself, it is

reasonable to research Norinaga's own path toward publication as a means of more fully

developing the world in which Reijo was writing and the steps she might have taken had

she sought a wider audience for her texts.

Norinaga is perhaps the best known of the *kokugakusha*, as it was his beliefs as a

scholar, building upon the works of *wagaku* 和学 (Japanese studies) scholars before him,

which led to the creation of the field. Norinaga was the second son born to cotton

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[77] Ibid.

merchant Ozu Sadatoshi 小津定利 in the town of Matsuzaka in the province of Ise and near the town of Ise itself. Having no skill as a merchant, he eventually travelled to Kyoto to study medicine, where he became involved in academia as well. The death of his elder brother pushed Norinaga into the role of head of the family, whereupon he changed the family name from Ozu to Motoori. He returned to Matsuzaka from Kyoto in 1757, working as a full time physician and part time scholar, and began reading the work of *wagaku* scholar Kamo no Mabuchi. Norinaga finally met Mabuchi in person in 1763, the first and only time, and officially became one of his disciples. The next year, Norinaga began his study of the text that would define his contributions to Japanese literary academia, the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Records of Ancient Matters).[78]

Norinaga's work on the *Kojiki* lasted decades. He painstakingly wrote an annotated version to the text, *Kojikiden* 古事記伝, chapters of which began to circulate in the 1780s and which began being published in the 1790s. The publishing of *Kojikiden* boosted Norinaga's reputation as both supporters and critics began to appear. Norinaga claimed that the *Kojiki*, dated 712, contained hints to the true essence of Japan, pre-contact with Chinese civilization and thus uncontaminated by foreign influence, which he described as a "harmonious community" that "gradually disappeared…after the beginning of cultural contact with China led to the introduction of flawed forms of knowledge in the form of Confucianism and Buddhism." He maintained that the "true Japan" thus existed in the idyllic past of the *Kojiki* and other ancient works, and it was

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[78] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 17-18.

only through detailed linguistic and literary analysis of these works that this prehistorical Shangri-La could be recovered.[79]

As the basis of Norinaga's academic system lay in the privileging of the indigenous, immediate, and emotional over the foreign, artificial, and intellectual – the term *kokugaku* was created purposefully to distinguish the field from *kangaku* 漢学 (Chinese studies)[80] – his denouncement of Reijo's literary style seems only natural. Although sexism undoubtedly played a role in Reijo's exclusion from the literary canon, Sakaki argues that crux of Reijo's debate with Norinaga, at least, stemmed less from the fact that she wrote in masculine genres *as a woman* and more that she wrote in masculine genres at all, as the *kokugaku* movement esteemed the spontaneous outflowing of emotion in literature – i.e. the "feminine" – as truly Japanese over the "artificiality" of constructed fiction or the "harshness" of the non-native Chinese language – the "masculine."[81]

In discussing how many female authors throughout Japanese history have been ignored, completely or by the expurgation of selective facets of their lives, Sakaki argues that studies of Murasaki Shikibu have often overlooked her use of Chinese quotations and intricate storytelling in order to create in her a paragon of feminine, native aesthetics, holding up Norinaga's writings on *Genji monogatari* as an example, and in some ways progenitor, of this trend. According to Sakaki, Norinaga praises the emotion, the *mono no aware* 物の哀れ or "pathos," of the text, to the deficit of the story's complex and well-

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[79] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 1-2.

[80] Ibid, 2.

[81] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 120.

structured plot.[82] Norinaga even goes so far as to argue that the recognition of *mono no aware*, the keen emotion of captured moments and the ability to be moved by them, constitutes the theme of Shikibu's masterpiece.[83] As Sakaki notes, "the Chinese factor is obliterated for the sake of the image of *Genji monogatari* as quintessentially Japanese and aesthetically homogeneous."[84]

How characters feel, the "essence" of each moment, is more important than any actual sequence of events in *Genji monogatari*, according to Norinaga. Human beings are rife with emotion, and thus Norinaga emphasizes the organic, innate emotional drive he observes in *Genji monogatari* rather than the details or circumstances surrounding said emotions. Beyond that, as stated, he equates these feelings with the feminine, "the signifier of half-formed, shadowy, abject, and undisciplined forces of affect and desire."[85] Logic, wisdom, and rationality are all attributes of the masculine, but under the surface, the true emotions of every human being are like that of a fragile woman, undisciplined and foolish but powerful basic instincts.[86] The end result of Norinaga's studies is an equating of "femininity" with "the poetic, the natural, and the indigenous," and Sakaki quotes Norinaga thusly:

> "The masculine…state of mind does not reflect true emotions. It is
> fabrication and false display. However wise one may be, the depth of
> one's heart is always like a girl…Chinese texts are concerned exclusively
> with fabricated and contrived appearance and neglect to write of true

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[82] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 113.

[83] Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, 34.

[84] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 113.

[85] Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, 39.

[86] Ibid, 33-35

emotions. The poetic narratives of Japan describe the depths of true human emotions...”[87]

Another scholar, Tomiko Yoda, concurs with Sakaki's observations, affirming that masculine discipline is associated with "the observation of artificial principles…that disavow personal feelings" such as those espoused by Buddhism and Confucianism, and thus in Norinaga's view masculinity is a false façade "which obscures the true nature of the human heart and in turn the essence of poetry."[88] Artistic intent should strive to reveal the truth of human emotions, which is innately feminine in nature. Therefore although men might engage in complicated logical thinking or Chinese-style storytelling, admittedly to the distaste of Norinaga, they at least would be pursuing such forms of thought honestly. A woman engaged in the same pursuits would, in essence, be speaking in a voice not her own, turning away from the truth of her nature and thus able only to craft falsehoods incapable of piercing the truth of the human heart. Thus Murasaki Shikibu is revered as a "champion of Japanese indigenous literature" for the exquisite *mono no aware* of *Genji monogatari* that Norinaga esteemed, and by the erasure of inconvenient facts of her character and writing, and by this same philosophy, Reijo, a female Sinophile skilled at juggling multiple characters in her complex plots, is removed entirely from the category of true Japanese literature.

Norinaga's work on the *Kojiki* is predominantly what elevated him to national and lasting fame. In 1783, his school in Matsuzaka, Suzuya 鈴屋, had eighty-seven students, mostly local people from the province of Ise, but by 1794 he had three hundred and fifty

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[87] Ibid, 114-115.

[88] Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, 34.

four students, nearly half of which travelled there from other provinces.[89] By 1801, the year of Norinaga's death, nearly five hundred students from forty-three provinces were attending Suzuya.[90] Furthermore, within Norinaga's lifetime, publishers recognized the commercial viability of his texts outside of Matsuzaka, and Norinaga was able both to reach a larger audience than would have otherwise been possible and to receive payment for the use of his texts.[91] Although not evidence exists to suggest that Reijo sought publishing, and furthermore she worked within a different field from Norinaga, nevertheless it is still interesting and potentially beneficial to consider how an academic who lived in the same area published his works.

### 2.3 Publishing in Edo Period Japan

Edo period publishing can be divided into three main categories: governmentally funded, private, and public. Ventures funded by the government were often Sinological in content, while public publishing centered around fiction and literary works and made up the vast percentage of published works. Private publishing, on the other hand, was often undertaken by poetry circles and intellectuals. *Kokugaku* schools such Suzuya, for example, represented some of the most active private publishing enterprises. However, as publishers recognized the economic value of authors such as Norinaga, *kokugaku* publishing gradually became a public and commercial endeavor.[92]

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[89] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 69.

[90] Ibid, 2.

[91] Kornicki, *Book in Japan*, 241.

[92] Ibid, 140-141.

Publishing in the Edo period primarily focused on Kyoto and Osaka in the first half of the period and Edo in the second half; little is known about publishing in the provinces, outside of these three cities. Larger castle towns such as Wakayama, Hiroshima, and Sendai hosted publishing operations, and although many of the texts published in these towns were related to these areas either by content or authorship, collaboration between publishers in castle towns and the "three capitals" reveals an interest in reaching a larger market.[93] Nagoya, however, stands as the largest provincial publisher, having thirty active publishing firms by the middle of the eighteenth century and at least one hundred booksellers active in the Tokugawa period from 1688 on. The city even represented something of a threat to publishers in the three capitals which otherwise held a tight monopoly on the trade, with some booksellers from Kyoto setting up branch offices in Nagoya to take advantage of the new market.[94] While of course necessarily speculative, it seems logical to postulate that if Reijo had sought publishing, her works likely would have gone to Nagoya, given the city's relative proximity to Ise and the smaller scale of the publishing operation there – although writers of fiction were known to gravitate towards Kyoto, Osaka, or Edo in order to be in close proximity with their audience and thus the market for their work.[95]

The two largest publishers in Nagoya were Eirakuya Tōshirō 永楽屋東四郎 and Fugetsudō Magosuke 風月堂孫助,where the founder of Eirakuya actually began as an apprentice. The first head of Eirakuya focused on publishing Sinological works, but the

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[93] Ibid, 217.

[94] Ibid, 213.

[95] Ibid, 236.

second head widened the company's output to include *e-hon* 絵本 (pictures books) and poetry collections. He also opened branch offices in Ōgaki 大垣 in Mino province and Edo, making Eirakuya unique among Nagoya publishers in that aspect. *Kojikiden* was published under the second head's reign, and remained in print for many decades. Eirakuya also gained fame as the publisher of the *Hokusai manga* 北斎漫画, further displaying the firm's success in identifying not just provincial talents, but authors and works that would appeal to a greater range of Japanese markets, a talent which would ultimately make it the most successful provincial publishing firm of the Edo period. According to Peter Kornicki, Eirakuya Tōshirō was "the most active and prolific publisher operating outside of the three cities, [and] the most visible sign of the diffusion of cultural production in the Tokugawa period."[96] The firm finally closed its doors in 1951.

Although Norinaga lived most of his life in Matsuzaka, his works were published not just in Nagoya but in the three capitals as well, by Suwaraya Mohee 須原屋茂兵衛 of Edo for example. Suwaraya was the leading publisher in Edo during Norinaga's lifetime as well as the most active publisher in Japan during the latter half of the Edo period; works published by Suwaraya and offshoot companies made up one-third of the published material in Edo during this period. The firm rose to prominence through routine publishing projects, such as the directories of samurai officials that were continually updated and republished with government permission, but their total output encompassed a plethora of genres. The firm lasted through the Meiji Restoration, unlike

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[96] Ibid, 214-215.

many others, but ultimately closed in 1904 when movable type began to replace woodblock printing.[97]

Suwaraya's printing of Norinaga's works represented recognition that the *kokugakusha* had relevance outside of his local school and promised economic returns in the wider market. When Suwaraya requested Norinaga's permission to print and distribute *Kojikiden* in Edo in 1797, the firm offered twenty-five *ryō* a year in return, a sizeable sum. Both the payment and the request for permission to publish shed some light on the position of the author in Tokugawa Japan, as Norinaga seems to have held both intellectual and financial rights to his works.[98] Author, however, is a fairly multi-faceted term when applied to Tokugawa Japan, with multiple titles used to refer to different kinds of authors.[99] The more positive example of Norinaga likely does not extend down to authors of pop-fiction on the lower end of the spectrum. Furthermore, although the rights of some authors might have been protected, they were often placed below those of the publishers; in other words, authors only received legal protection as an unintentional consequence of publishers ensuring that their investments were protected, especially due to the fact that authors' names were often an important selling point for published works, particularly fiction.[100]

As discussed in chapter one, Reijo's works existed only in manuscript form until Yosano Akiko transcribed and published a selection of the texts in 1915. Manuscript copies of *Ayashi no yogatari* are held by the National Diet Library, the Ibaraki University

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[97] Ibid, 211-212.

[98] Ibid, 241.

[99] Ibid, 229.

[100] Ibid, 224-225.

Library, the Izawa Collection in Matsuzaka, and the Kurokawa Collection in the Jissen

Women's University Library, although none have been digitally scanned and made

available to view online.[101] Copies of her other works may be found at a variety of

institutions.[102] Although properly tracing the history of the manuscript holdings of

Reijo's body of work is beyond the scope of this paper, the existence of such a large

number of her texts in manuscript form raises questions as to Reijo's impact in her

community. It is exceptional that such a large number of Reijo's texts exist given that

none of them were published. Her husband helped to produce clean copies of her

manuscripts,[103] but who collected and preserved all of these manuscripts is unknown.

Furthermore, although no evidence exists to suggest that Reijo sought publishing for her

works, she did not write "personal" texts but rather sprawling multi-volume narratives or,

in the case of *Ayashi no yogatari*, texts that played upon current popular tastes for

literature. Beyond that, upon either her or her husbands' request, several academics of the

day provided prefaces for Reijo's works,[104] while her own authorial prefaces presume an

audience. Her prefaces are similar to others written for published works in the same

period, and play upon many authorial tropes of the day. For example, Sakaki notes that in

the preface to *Ayashi no yogatari*, as per convention Reijo apologizes profusely to her

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[101] See the National Diet Library website at http://iss.ndl.go.jp/books/R100000002-I000007275554-00 and the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books website at http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/KTGSearch.cgi for more information on these holdings.

[102] Information on the status of other texts may once again be found on the National Diet Library website and the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books website.

[103] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 117.

[104] Ibid.

readers for what she deems the poorness of her work and her own lack of talent.[105] Furthermore, Reijo claims that she lives in seclusion and deems her work unsuitable for others to read, in direct opposition to the reality of her position as an active *renga* poet in the region. Sakaki postulates that Reijo thus "anoints herself as a woman of letters precisely by disavowing the promise of literary fame."[106] In total, Reijo's preface points to someone not only writing for others but aware of an audience.

As an upper-class woman, Reijo certainly did not need to write for money, and perhaps would have considered the practice vulgar. Even published authors often hid behind multiple pseudonyms so at to "creat[e] a distance between their more serious or scholarly writing and their popular fiction," or to craft a public persona to protect their everyday identity.[107] Kornicki notes the "ambivalence felt by many popular writers towards the business of fictional writing" but does not comment upon a link between this feeling and the propensity of authors to attempt to conceal their identities beyond saying that it bears further examination.[108] Beyond suppositions of Reijo's own opinion on professional writing, how her status as a woman in Tokugawa Japan would have affected any attempt she might have made to publish her works is unknown. Her body of work, however, presupposes an audience, which manuscript texts must still have provided her.

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[105] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 155.

[106] Ibid, 156.

[107] Kornicki, *Book in Japan*, 238.

[108] Ibid, 239.

Although publishing was a booming industry in the Tokugawa period, allowing

for the appearance of the first professional writers,[109] manuscript culture still thrived well

into the nineteenth century because of the different utility manuscripts offered as opposed

to published texts. Manuscript texts are most noteworthy as a vehicle for the

maintenance of secret traditions passed down only to select initiates and the distribution

of governmentally banned or sensitive material.[110] Kornicki argues, however, that there

was some circulation of popular fiction in manuscript form, such as in the *ninjōbon* 人情

本 genre in which some published texts appear to have been based upon older

unpublished works written by "amateurs."[111] However, the fundamental reason for

keeping a text in manuscript form, regardless of the type of text, was to limit the circle of

people the text might reach, whether to conceal it from government officials or to keep it

only within a small group of acquaintances. Thus if Reijo wanted to write for an audience

but did not wish to receive money for her work, it is logical that she then would not have

sought publishing.

In the end, however, Reijo never sought publishing is, at this point, a question

with only speculative answers, as is how her reputation might have changed if her works

had been published. Studies of contemporary authors, published or not, however, are

nonetheless worthwhile to undertake, especially those authors who lived in the same area

as Reijo, wrote in the same genres as she did, or were female authors such as herself.

Norinaga stands as a useful example because of his lasting national fame, his location in

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid, 78.

[111] Ibid, 103.

Matsuzaka in relative proximity to Ise, and his personal acquaintance with Reijo. Examining how different authors sought publishing, how publishing affected their status, and how they were received both by their contemporaries and by modernity will help to create a fuller picture of Reijo herself, even if such information is only tangential related to her. At this point, Reijo is still, as Kado terms her, a shrine within a deep forest, but as more studies are undertaken on her, the light of modern criticism might break through the branches and pull Reijo out of the shadows of obscurity and into the Japanese literary canon where she belongs.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE INFLUENCE OF *SETSUWA* AND *FUJŌKAN* IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY

# MODERN JAPAN

Although a difficult to define genre, *setsuwa* have undoubtedly had a heavy impact on Japanese literature and popular imagination at large. One theme often expounded upon in these short, prose, often Buddhist stories is that of impurity, or *fujōkan*, particularly focusing upon the female body. Although *setsuwa* flourished in the late Heian and early Kamakura periods, needless to say the influence of these stories stretched well beyond the chronological limits of their production. The echo of *setsuwa* is evident, for example, in the *kaidan* ghost stories popular in the Tokugawa period, which similarly often feature women in the roles of the monstrous and grotesque though generally without religious overtones. Although in the Tokugawa period, *kaidan* steadily slid toward secularization, shedding religious aspects as public interest in these stories boomed, the theme of *fujōkan* and the misogyny often present in medieval Buddhism and *setsuwa* cast a long shadow over subsequent literary genres. The analysis of *setsuwa* and *fujōkan* in this chapter will explore the treatment of women in Japan's supernatural tale tradition, laying the foundation for an examination of how these themes played out in the early modern period and how a female writer engaged with the negative views on femininity that her culture embraced in the latter half of this paper.

### 3.1 Setsuwa: Japan's Literary Tradition of Supernatural Tales

As previously stated, the genre of *setsuwa* or *setsuwa-bungaku* 説話文学 (tale literature) is notoriously difficult to define, and this question of definition has haunted scholars since almost the creation of the genre. Most succinctly, *setsuwa* are short prose tales, often but not always Buddhist in theme, written and compiled approximately between the ninth and mid-fourteenth centuries.[112] The origins of the tales are often deliberately obscure, although the tales themselves are presented as truth, and the compiler as more historian than author.[113] As folk tales, *setsuwa* are often looked to for images of the lives and beliefs of commoners in premodern Japan, and the earthiness of these tales is often held up in contrast to the polished and refined artifice of classical court literature.[114]

Most *setsuwa* present fantastic, horrific, or humorous events that demonstrate some Buddhist principle, though, as previously stated, not all *setsuwa* are religious in theme. While many *setsuwa* likely began as folktales, others are much more overtly Buddhist, and the diction of individual tales may vary greatly in tone and formality depending on the subject matter.[115] In her book *Ambiguous Bodies: Reading the Grotesque in Japanese Setsuwa Tales*, while attempting to piece together a definition of the *setsuwa* genre and the history of the term, Michelle Osterfield Li examines Sakai Kohei's 1923 essay on *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (Tales of Times Now Past),

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[112] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 1.

[113] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 28.

[114] Keene, *Seeds in the Heart*, 568.

[115] Ibid, 569.

the prototypical *setsuwa* collection, entitled "*Konjaku monogatari shū* no shin kenkyū."

In his work, Sakai apparently draws little distinction between secular and Buddhist

*setsuwa*, claiming that both would have been used for religious purposes because "all

experience [falls] within the Buddhist worldview," and thus "the compiler makes sense of

events in Buddhist terms whether or not they are overtly connected to Buddhist teachings."

Sakai further comments upon the "historical" aspects of *setsuwa*, arguing that while

history itself is written to inform, *setsuwa*, like *rekishi monogatari*, "are also meant to

instruct and entertain."[116] To that end, *setsuwa* often contain a moral or an explanation at

the end of the story, connecting the depicted events with whatever Buddhist principle the

author hopes to expound, though the connection between the events and the moral is not

always natural or convincing.[117]

Even the term "*setsuwa*" has a rather complicated history. Although it did not

come to be employed in the modern usage until the Taishō period, the term itself goes

back as far as 853, appearing in *Juketsu shū* 授決集 (*Collection of Orally Transmitted*

*Teachings*), a book about Chinese Buddhist teachings by the Tendai priest Enchin. In its

early uses, *setsuwa* contained a strong sense of the oral tradition – the Chinese term for

the characters, *shuohua*, refers more specifically to oral storytelling – but also referred to

the idea of stories for entertainment or "light conversation."[118] Donald Keene claims the

early usage of the word referred generally to "orally transmitted tales."[119] As previous

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[116] Li, Ambiguous Bodies, 19.

[117] Keene, Seeds in the Heart, 568.

[118] Li, Ambiguous Bodies, 15.

[119] Keene, Seeds in the Heart, 568.

stated, the modern usage of the term did not appear until the Taishō period, in Haga

Yaichi's 芳賀弥一 (1867-1927) 1913 work *Kōshō Konjaku monogatari shū*, although the

concept began to circulate almost 30 years before that, in the later 1880s. Although this is

the first appearance of the term *setsuwa* as it would be used from then on in the literary

field, according to Li, Haga does not define the term and yet does not seem to refer to a

previous use of the word.[120]

　　While *Nihon Ryōiki* 日本霊異記, compiled in the ninth century, is ostensibly the

first *setsuwa* collection, early scholarship on *setsuwa* revolved around the most major

collection of *setsuwa*, *Konjaku monogatari-shū*, compiled in the twelfth century – though

both authorship and the exact dates of its creation are unclear.[121] Many ideas about the

definition of the genre of *setsuwa* can be traced back to this early scholarship on *Konjaku*,

such as the lack of strong distinctions between the secular and Buddhist tales;[122] the

similarities between *setsuwa* and *rekishi monogatari*, especially centering on the phrase

"now it is the past" which the tales often open with;[123] and the indigenous "folk" aspects

of *setsuwa*.[124] The native folk aspect of *setsuwa* was considered especially important in

the formation of the genre, to the point that the foreign elements present in collections

such as *Konjaku* were often downplayed in favor of this idea of the indigenous.

Furthermore, according to Li, "*Konjaku* could be used to fill in certain gaps in the

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[120] Li, Ambiguous Bodies, 18-19.

[121] Keene, *Seeds in the Heart,* 568, 572.

[122] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 16-17.

[123] Ibid, 27.

[124] Ibid, 24.

creation of a national literature. If literature was to have greater relevance to the question

of what it means to be Japanese, then narratives about all kinds of people, not just the

elite, had to be included."[125]

In the end, although many scholars have attempted to give a concise definition of

the genre, Li argues that "one cannot provide a concise and narrow definition of *setsuwa*

as a single entity without glossing over or ignoring important differences between stories

and collections or denying the existence of many unanswered questions regarding

them…So much knowledge of *setsuwa* is necessarily speculative…"[126] Although most

definitions share similar features, different scholars focus on different aspects of *setsuwa*

based upon their own preconceived ideas or personal knowledge of the genre, the time

period in which they were writing, or their individual biases. In *Ambiguous Bodies,* after

several pages of explanation highlighting the complicatedness of the issue, Li presents

her definition of *setsuwa*, compiled both from studies of the works of other scholars and

the literature itself, pared down to as follows:

> "Usually written with straightforward, unadorned language, *setsuwa* range
> from a few lines or passages to several pages…After stating or implying
> that the story occurs in the near or distant past, the narrator introduces a
> protagonist who supposedly lived. Something happened to him or her.
> This event is usually marked by a progression from the ordinary to the
> unusual or extraordinary…*Setsuwa* often end with observations or a moral
> by a commentator apart from the narrative…The final passage frequently
> states that the story was told and passed down and may even indicate the
> first person to transmit it."[127]

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid, 26.

[127] Ibid, 26-27.

## 3.2 Women in Buddhist Literature and the Concept of *Fujōkan*

Although it cannot be claimed that every person or even every Buddhist in medieval Japan discriminated against women, it would be a truism to state that medieval Japanese Buddhism had a strong misogynistic bent. As Buddhism was the dominant paradigm of the medieval period, aided by the patriarchal Confucianist philosophy that came over from the continent and began to hold sway during this period, this resulted in an often hostile environment for women. According to medieval Buddhist thought, women could not gain enlightenment as women. Though capable of living their lives according to proper doctrine and inspiring others through their actions, women could at best hope only to be reborn as a man, at which point they would then have at least the potential to reach nirvana.[128] Of course, the redemptive possibilities for women were also often brought up in tandem with stories of their fundamentally cursed nature, especially in teachings with women as the primary audience.[129] Nevertheless, the fact remains that women were considered lesser than, if not overtly dangerous to, men, and thus faced the added obstacle of their female nature when striving for enlightenment.

One phrase that often comes up when considering the view of women in medieval Buddhism is *itsutsu no sawari* 五の障り (the Fivefold Obstruction or Five Obstructions),[130] also pronounced *goshō* 五障, which R. Keller Kimbrough calls "the

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[128] Pandey, "Women," 325.

[129] Pandey, "Desire," 204.

[130] Ibid, 326.

heart of the traditional Buddhist antipathy toward women."[131] This phrase refers to the

belief that women were excluded from the five forms of rebirth and thus unable to reach

Buddahood.[132] Women were fundamentally unclean, guilty of "pollut[ing] the earth and

the water with blood shed in childbirth" and even menstruation, and for these crimes

sentenced to the women-specific Blood Pool Hell after death.[133] Women were even

considered the rebirths of people doomed by bad karma in a previous life. The *otogizōshi*

御伽草子 (Muromachi period short prose fiction) *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* states that "only

evil-doers are reborn as women," and further that "few men fall into hell, but many

women do."[134]

Women were considered to have seven main vices:  the desire to incite men to

lust, jealousy, deceit, egocentrism and a focus on "self-adornment," attachment,

"uncontrolled desire," and finally uncleanliness due to pregnancy, childbirth, and

menstruation.[135] Women were viewed as "physical creatures" who had "the potential to

obstruct the enlightenment of men and [were] evil enough to do so intentionally."[136] The

onus of sexual desire was placed firmly upon women, who simultaneously were more

driven by their own passions than men and, purposefully or not, roused in men passions

that might rob those men of their chance for enlightenment or a good rebirth. As Li

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[131] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 102.

[132] Pandey, "Women," 326.

[133] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 230-231.

[134] Ibid, 102.

[135] Pandey, "Women," 326.

[136] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 110-111.

affirms, to the medieval Japanese mind "women represent[ed] evil, relentless desire, and the loss of control."[137]

Of course, not everyone accepted this view of women – proselytizers often used stories of exceptional female figures who managed to achieve enlightenment or enter the Pure Land in spite of their obstructive femininity, such as the story in the *Lotus Sutra* of the Dragon King's daughter who spontaneously transformed into a man upon reaching enlightenment, to offer the women in the audience some chance to escape their fate of the Blood Pool Hell,[138] and monks often kept secret wives or otherwise pursued heterosexual relations even though heterosexual activity particularly was seen as stealing away a man's chance for Buddhahood.[139] Nevertheless misogynistic philosophy was widespread and internalized by both men and women, and the literature of the period reflected this belief. In her articles "Women, Sexuality, and Enlightenment:  *Kankyo no tomo*" and "Desire and Disgust:  Meditations on the Impure Body in Medieval Japanese Narratives," Rajyashree Pandey examines two *setsuwa* collections, famous medieval essayist and recluse Kamo no Chomei's 鴨長明 (c.1153-1216) *Hosshinshū* 発心集 (Tales of Enlightenment) and Buddhist priest Keisei's 慶政 (1189-1268) *Kankyo no tomo* 閑居友 (A Companion in Solitude), written specifically around the Buddhist concept of impurity, *fujōkan* in Japanese. According to Pandey, while in the original Buddhist scriptures impurity of the physical body was a genderless belief, slowly it came to focus solely on

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[137] Ibid, 110.

[138] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 110.

[139] Li, *Ambiguous Bodies*, 111.

the female body, likely as a result of the perceived female propensity and desire to incite lust in men and thus rob them of their ability to attain enlightenment.[140]

In order to fully understand *fujōkan*, one part of a priest's training was to meditate on corpses, a practice originating in India. While originally priests were supposed to contemplate corpses of their own sex,[141] eventually, as previously stated, the idea of impurity came to focus upon the feminine body. In the Buddhist mindset, desire produces attachment to worldly things, preventing enlightenment, and thus desire must be shed in order to attain nirvana. Sexual desire was a prime example of worldly attachment, and thus one tactic taken to exterminate said desire was to make women sexually undesirable, primarily through graphic examinations of women's corpses or mutilated bodies.[142] In his book *Preachers, Poets, Women, and the Way*, R. Keller Kimbrough examines how famous literary figures from the classical period, particularly women, came to be used in the medieval period in Buddhist preaching. While he argues that the non-historical stories that sprang up around women such as Murasaki Shikibu, Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (c.825–c.900), and especially Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部 (c.976–?) helped to canonize them as quintessential literary figures in the Japanese imagination, such stories nevertheless reflect the sexism of the period in which they were written. The stories about these women use a "language of extremes." Whatever accomplishments the women have – beauty, literary ability, fame, richness – is inevitably turned on its head to represent the need for Buddhist philosophy. Kimbrough claims that the heights and depths these

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[140] Panday, *Desire and Disgust*, 195-196.

[141] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 11.

[142] Pandey, "Desire and Disgust," 197.

women attain "are two sides of a single coin…it is the very heights to which the women attain that precipitate their falls," and further that "morality tales frequently idealize [these women] in their wretchedness for their desperate and unequivocal turns to Buddhism."[143]

Ono no Komachi in particular was often used to explicate the concept of *fujōkan*. Remembered for her legendary beauty, Komachi seems the perfect figure to represent what Pandey calls the trope of the "dissembling woman,"[144] an exquisite façade but defiled underneath. The painting genre *kusō-e* 九相絵 or *kusō-zu* 九相図, pictures representing the nine stages of bodily putrefaction used to expound the concepts of both *fujōkan* and *mujōkan* (impermanence) as particularly associated with the earthly body, gained popularity in the Kamakura period. *Kusō-e* always featured a woman in the primary role, and Komachi often stood as the archetypal figure for these pictures.[145] *Kusō-e* were one tactic taken to discourage male sexuality by revealing the "truth" about female physicality through examining a woman's corpse gradually decaying until nothing remained. As previously stated, the accomplishments of Heian female figures were generally used in the medieval period in the opposite extreme; thus, "Komachi's legendary looks naturally invited stories of her later poverty, disfigurement, and degradation," and she was even prophesied to "attain her own Buddhist apotheosis as a result of extreme deprivation and bodily humiliation."[146]

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[143] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 16.

[144] Pandey, "Women," 329-330.

[145] Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 10.

[146] Ibid, 12.

Sermons on *fujōkan* did not focus only on Komachi or other famous female figures, though, but instead applied to women and the female form in general. However, Pandey argues that while Indian Buddhist literature stresses *fujōkan* with lurid descriptions of corrupt female bodies, Japanese Buddhist literature favors *mujōkan* 無常観 (impermanence) over *fujōkan* as a vehicle for extinguishing attachment. She attributes the difference to both Heian courtly aesthetics in which physical appearance was relatively unfocused upon, and the importance of *mujō* itself as a poetic aesthetic.[147] As an example of the trend, Pandey compares an Indian story of a courtesan who plucks her own eyeball out in an attempt to prove to a man the impure reality of her beautiful appearance[148] with a Japanese *setsuwa* in which a woman merely simulates physical decay by disheveling her hair and clothes and applying discolored makeup in order to aid a monk who has become enamored with her to shed himself of his earthly attachments and return to the path of enlightenment.[149]

Similarly, in several of the stories from *Kankyo no tomo* and *Hosshinshū*, the authors use the seven vices of women themselves to lead others to enlightenment. For example, in one story a woman literally turns herself into a demon due to her jealousy over a lover who spurned her affections. Upon capture by the townsfolk and before committing suicide she begs the people surrounding her to tell her story to their wives and daughters that she might be a negative example for them and thus stop other women

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[147] Pandey, "Desire," 197.

[148] Ibid, 209.

[149] Ibid, 214.

from falling into the same trap of deluded attachment.[150] In *setsuwa*, women fill a "temptress and redemptress" position, as Pandey dubs it, both enticing men to sin and, purposefully or accidentally, revealing their own impurity and thus in the end helping others on their own path to enlightenment. Yet, at the same time, less lurid and more ambivalent terms are used to describe the grossness of the women's physical state, when the body itself is even described at all.[151] Regardless of the vehicle used, however, women were associated with corruption, and in Buddhist literature they often appear, willfully or not, as agents acting not for their own but for others', particularly men's, enlightenment, often using the grossness, disfigurement, or mutilation of their own bodies to do so.

While not *setsuwa*, Reijo's tales in *Ayashi no yogatari* nevertheless reflect the society and culture in which they were written, though with idiosyncratic changes symptomatic of their author. Although Reijo distanced herself from Buddhist moralizing and avoided pedantry in her tales, the influence of Buddhism is still apparent, especially in the revelatory scenes of a female character's supernatural transformation. The subversion in Reijo's tales lies not in the lack of women as the site of impurity and supernatural metamorphosis, but in the ultimately ambivalent, even sympathetic, treatment of such women. While the supernatural women in *Ugetsu monogatari* – for example, Manago in "Lust of the White Serpent," Isora in "Cauldron of Kibitsu," and especially Miyagi in "The House Amid the Thickets" – are sympathetic to readers as victims of injustice, only Miyagi is unthreatening, and all three leave the men in their

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[150] Pandey, "Women," 340.

[151] Pandey, "Desire," 203.

lives either intensely frightened or dead. The supernatural women in the two tales from *Ayashi no yogatari* which will be examined in depth in chapter five, however, are de-fanged. Although their appearance is frightful and may initially induce panic in their male companions, in the end both are treated with sympathy, by both the narrator and other characters, whose emotions towards the women range from pity to love.

# CHAPTER 4

## *KAIDAN* AND AKINARI

### 4.1 *Kaidan* as a Genre Term

Although *kaidan* as a term might be used to described a vast swath of texts from the Tokugawa period, it is not a traditional genre term ascribed to the era by later academics. Tokugawa genre terminology is a field fraught with disagreement, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to properly argue for the consideration of *kaidan* as an appropriate genre term. However, for the purposes of this paper, upon consideration of many examples of Tokugawa popular fiction and a study of *Ayashi no yogatari* itself, I use *kaidan* as a genre or genre-like term to compare Reijo's text to texts of similar content and time period. Furthermore, although *kaidan* constitute a trend in published texts and often appear as short prose stories, given the oral tradition of *kaidan* and the later popularity of supernatural tales on the *kabuki* stage, I hesitate to add structural standards to my working definition of *kaidan* in this paper given that these differing stories are largely alike in all but form.

The production of *setsuwa* ended with the close of the Kamakura period (1185-1333), but the influence of *setsuwa* in Japanese literature stretched on. Like *setsuwa*, in the early Tokugawa period (1600-1867), *kaidan* (ghost stories or uncanny tales) were often used by Buddhist priests in their sermonizing, particularly those stories which featured supernatural women.[152] For example, *New Tales for the Trimmed Lampwick* (*Jian deng xin hua*), a collection of Chinese supernatural tales, was studied by Zen

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[152] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 136.

Buddhist monks and used in their teachings, and influenced the work of many Japanese literary figures, such as Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (c.1611-1691), Ueda Akinari, and, of course, Arakida Reijo. *New Tales* was actually transmitted throughout the whole of East Asia, despite being a work of lesser importance in its home country of China.[153] Although *kaidan* were utilized for religious purposes in the early years of the Tokugawa period, with the passage of time the tales gradually became secularized, shedding their didactic elements in favor of entertainment as the general public's thirst for *kaidan* grew.[154]

*Kaidan*, like *setsuwa*, are supernatural stories with an oral storytelling tradition. Besides the authors mentioned above, other well-known authors of *kaidan* include Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583-1657), who will be examined more below; Unpō 雲峰 (1678-1748), author of *Kaidan otogi zakura* 怪談御伽桜, among other texts; Okamoto Kidō 岡本綺堂 (1872-1939), author of the *kabuki* play *Banchō Sarayashiki* 番町皿屋敷, itself based on a famous Japanese folktale; and Tsuruya Nanboku IV 鶴屋南北 (1755-1829), author of the *kabuki* play *Tōkaidō yotsuya kaidan* 東海道四谷怪談, arguably the most famous *kaidan* in Japanese history. Although scary or strange stories exist throughout Japanese literary history, *kaidan* particularly reached a massive wave of popularity in the Tokugawa period. The booming publishing industry rushed to satiate the public's demands for such stories, and *hyaku monogatari kaidan kai* 百物語会, parties where people would gather together to tell one hundred ghost stories throughout the night

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[153] Ibid, 103.

[154] Reider, *Tales*, 3.

in the hopes of invoking a spirit or some other ghostly creature to visit them, gained popularity.[155]

The term *kaidan* refers broadly to stories about the supernatural:[156] k*aidan* are tales that "horrify and excite" through description of the "strange and mysterious," the "horrific and gruesome,"[157] although the tales themselves are not necessarily scary. Subject matter and origin can vary greatly from story to story, but revenge is a common motif.[158] Moreover, women often play a large role in *kaidan*, even if they are not the point-of-view characters. Buddhist monks used tales of female jealousy and subsequent transformation due to such negative emotions to preach against the seven vices of womanhood; jealous women often transformed into snakes, which were especially seen as "represent[ing] the dark side of feminine qualities: jealousy, excessive attachment, and sexual desire."[159] Although the religious aspects of these themes gradually faded as the genre gained general popularity, the concepts themselves remained behind, tainting even secular *kaidan* with such negative views of women.

In his review of Noriko Reider's work, *Tales of the Supernatural*, Lawrence E. Marceau marks a small but important flaw in Reider's logic. While she extols the widespread belief in the Tokugawa period in happenings and beings which are now

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[155] Addiss, *Japanese Ghosts and Demons*, 18-19.

[156] Masao, *Kaiki*, 3-4.

[157] Reider, *Tales*, 1.

[158] Ibid, 7-8.

[159] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 167.

termed "supernatural,"[160] Marceau points out that the people of Tokugawa Japan would not have made the same distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" events that modern readers do, considering supernatural occurrences to fall under the purview of natural phenomenon.[161] As such, modern readers must be careful to not overanalyze texts for supernatural content in an attempt to defend *kaidan* as a genre, but rather to examine the purpose of the texts. The retelling of unexplained, ghostly, or miraculous incidents makes up the central theme of many Tokugawa era popular texts, written often for the entertainment of the masses, and it is these texts that I consider under the term of *kaidan*.

Much of Tokugawa period literature is traditionally divided in genres by terms that refer more to textual structure than to content, although the dichotomy of structure and content is not a strong one. Terms like *kana-zōshi* 仮名草子 (books written using Japanese syllabic characters), *e-hon*, and *yomihon* refer more generally to the form of the text than the contents, and indeed there is much overlap in the contents of different genres and dissimilarities between texts of the same genre. Again, it would be false to posit a strongly held dichotomy between structure and content in discussing these conventional genre terms, as if the contents have no bearings on different classifications. In general, however, much of the traditional terminology seems to lean more towards structural similarities and dissimilarities rather than thematic ones, similar to the English "novel" or "poem," rather than "mystery" or "science fiction." However, oppositely, genre terms such as *sharebon* 洒落本, *kokkeibon* 滑稽本, and *ninjōbon* refer more to a work's contents than structure – pleasure-quarters comic stories, comic stories focused on

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[160] Reider, *Tales*, 35.

[161] Marceau, Review of *Tales of the Supernatural*, 332.

commoner life, and romantic tales respectively. Thus is it not without precedent that *kaidan* is posited as a potential genre term.

Furthermore, genre describes by definition at least semi-artificial boundaries between texts. Genres are determined by both time and culture and are subject to changes reflective of societal fluctuations. Although the idea of genre has existed since at least the time of Aristotle, current scholarship has complicated the issue from simple classification of a few basic forms of literature to "typified social action…[the] rhetorical use of symbols in frequently encountered contexts in order to accomplish writers' and readers' purposes."[162] Moreover, while some writers of course set out to write a specific type of text, many other authors do not, and in either case, outside forces often decide the ultimate fate of any given text vis-à-vis genre. In terms of Tokugawa period literature, scholars must contend simultaneous with ideas of genre stemming contemporarily from the Tokugawa period, with later Meiji scholars' attempts to standardize literary studies and the national canon, and finally with modern theories of genre fashioned in the intervening years until the present. The argument is thus burdened with many years of theory and the various ideologies of different eras, each with their own logic and proponents. Given the partially man-made nature of genre, arguments could certainly be made for different genre and sub-genre configurations, for there exists no immutable reason to group texts based upon certain similarities and not upon others. In academia as elsewhere, tradition should not be adhered to merely because it is tradition, but neither should it be flounced for the same reason. Perhaps *kaidan* is rightfully not considered a

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[162] Devitt, "Integrating," 697.

genre and offers no use to academia in this setting, but the logic of comparing texts based upon similar characteristics is itself not flawed.

In the large scale picture of literature, genre has both structural and thematic implications. Two texts may cover a range of differing themes and be similar only in form, or oppositely differ in form but overlap in content – for example, a romance novel and a mystery novel versus a fantasy poem and a fantasy short story. In considering genre thusly, one might imagine a graph with a horizontal and vertical axis for structural and thematic characteristics respectively. Any given text would have at least two genre designations, one for form and one for content. As French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) affirms, "Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text."[163] Thus, although *kaidan* is not considered a genre by traditional Edo terminology, nevertheless for the purposes of this paper it will be used as a thematic genre term. *Kaidan* flourished during a certain time period, have historical precedent and lasting literary import, are characterized by well-recognized authors, and have a recognizable formula and similarities between texts. Most importantly, the term calls to mind a specific image in the popular imagination, and although many similar genre terms appeared in the postwar period, "even today, ghost stories (including true stories) are often called *kaidan*."[164]

The popularity of *kaidan* sprang out of the relative calm of the Tokugawa era. After the turmoil of the medieval period, the reign of the Tokugawa shogunate brought a time of peace during which Japanese culture developed immensely. Printing technology

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[163] Derrida, "Law of Genre," 65.

[164] Masao, *Kaiki*, 5.

advanced and with it the masses' desire for new reading material.[165] Peace allowed

people the leisure for entertainment, and popular tastes turned to fantastic tales due, likely

due to the same peace that granted people time for leisure in the first place, as they

longed for an escape from the commonplace.[166] Though *kaidan* originally told rather

simple stories, their plots grew more complex as public demand increased. A distinct

Chinese influence also grew within the genre, adding a flavor of exoticism to the

stories.[167]

In 1637, Hayashi Razan, Confucian advisor to the first four Tokugawa shoguns

and founder of the Hayashi line of Confucian scholars and shogunal advisors, wrote

*Kaidan* 怪談 for the then ailing shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604-1651).[168]

Although concrete evidence linking Razan to *Kaidan* is scarce,[169] the work represents one

of the first examples of a *kaidan* collection. A collection of Chinese fantastic tales

translated into Japanese, *Kaidan* is a departure from the more "serious" scholarship that

Razan's name invokes. It was later republished for purchase under the name *Kaidan*

*zensho* 怪談全書, or "A Complete Collection of Fantastic Tales," invoking both the

growing popularity of *kaidan* and the authority of the Hayashi name. Furthermore, as a

collection of translated Chinese tales, *Kaidan zensho* played upon the current taste for

foreign exoticism in popular literature.

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[165] Ibid.

[166] Addiss, *Japanese Ghosts and Demons*, 19.

[167] Ibid, 1.

[168] Reider, *Tale*, 9.

[169] Boot, "Hayashi Razan to *Kaidan zensho*," 3.

Asai Ryōi stands as another important early figure in *kaidan* history. He

employed the technique of *hon'an* (adaptation) in his 1666 collection of *kaidan* entitled

*Otogi bōko* 御伽婢子 (Funeral Figurines), in which he adapted several stories from *New*

*Tales*[170] – Razan had previously transcribed the collection in 1602.[171] Although little is

known of Ryōi's life, he stands as an important figure in early Tokugawa popular

literature, being a quintessential author in the genre of *kana-zōshi*.[172] *Otogi bōko*, a

collection of sixty-eight tales, is one of his more popular works, and includes a version of

the *New Tales* story "The Story of the Peony Lantern" (牡丹燈記 *Mudan deng ji*),

translated by Ryōi as "Botan no tōrō" 牡丹灯籠. Adaptations of "The Story of the Peony

Lantern" were very popular in Tokugawa Japan, as Fumiko Jōo discusses in her

dissertation "'The Peony Lantern' and Fantastic Tales in Late Imperial China and

Tokugawa Japan: Local History, Religion, and Gender," and among other Tokugawa

authors, Reijo also rewrote the story in her *kaidan* collection, *Ayashi no yogatari*, as

"Ukigusa" (Floating Weeds), which will be considered in chapter five.[173] Ryōi's *Otogi*

*boko*, however, represents the first entrance of *New Tales* to the Japanese popular

consciousness at large, and also marks an important ideological shift in the secularization

of *kaidan*, previously often beholden to their *setsuwa* forbearers and thus primarily

didactic in style and used in Buddhist sermons. Although Ryōi's *kaidan* are not

completely without moral lessons, "they shift attention from moral concerns to human

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[170] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 127.

[171] Ibid 104.

[172] Lane, "Beginnings of the Modern Japanese Novel," 671.

[173] Ibid 103.

nature, by suggesting a link between intense emotions and fantastic occurrences. Stories like 'Botan no tōrō'…use the supernatural mainly to dramatize the power of human longing, love, and rage."[174]

## 4.2 Ueda Akinari and *Ugetsu monogatari*

In the nineteenth century, *kaidan* became increasingly popular on the *kabuki* stage, with such famous pieces as *Tōkaidō yotsuya kaidan*, mentioned above. However, Noriko Reider claims that *kaidan* peaked as a genre in 1776 with the publishing of Ueda Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari*, and indeed Akinari truly elevated *kaidan* texts as a whole with his work.[175] Akinari was born to a prostitute in the pleasure district of Osaka then adopted and raised in a merchant household, but he never embraced the family industry, instead preferring scholarly pursuits.[176] He studied *kokugaku* under Katō Umaki 加藤美樹 (1721-1777), himself a disciple of the great Kamo no Mabuchi, and after a fire destroyed the family business in 1771, Akinari gave up the mercantile life altogether and began studying medicine under Confucian scholar and fellow author Tsuga Teishō 都賀庭鐘 (1718-1794).[177] Teishō himself published a collection of *kaidan* influenced by Chinese popular fiction, and although *Ugetsu monogatari* ultimately far outstripped

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[174] Asai, "The Peony Lantern," 2-3.

[175] Reider, *Tales*, 1.

[176] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 18.

[177] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 24-25.

Teishō's works, Teishō still undoubtedly greatly influenced both the structure and content of Akinari's work.[178]

Ugetsu monogatari falls into both the yomihon and kaidan genres and is an important work in both. Ugetsu was not Akinari's first work – he published two collections of ukiyo-zōshi 浮世草子 in 1766 and 1767 respectively[179] – but it was a dramatic turning point in his literary career. Its poetic language, evocative imagery, masterfully crafted structure, and countless allusions to other works earned Akinari a place in the Japanese canon. In fact, in many cases, the popularity of the work outstrips the author, with many modern readers recognizing Ugetsu monogatari but not the name Ueda Akinari. In his biography on Akinari, Blake Morgan Young even slightly remonstrates the overbearing popularity of Ugetsu in Akinari's life, arguing that while the kaidan collection was an important point both in literary history and Akinari's own career, it now overshadows the non-fiction works of Akinari's later life in which his scholarly intellect and diversified talents are particularly evident.[180]

Nevertheless, as stated above, Ugetsu monogatari is an important work, both in its own right and as an example of kaidan and yomihon fiction. Yomihon as a genre was, in a sense, a reaction against the ukiyo-zōshi genre that came before it, an attempt to separate from the light and popular literature of the "floating world" and delve into more educated subject matter.[181] Although the Tokugawa shogunate still enforced its policy of

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[178] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 46-47.

[179] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 24.

[180] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 67.

[181] Ibid, 45-46.

*sakoku* 鎖国, or national isolation, the government could not completely stop the flow of new information into the country nor the minds of its country's intellectuals as they sought for new ways to engage with the world around them. Leon Zolbrod claims that, in the evolving and yet still restrictive times of the eighteenth century, the *yomihon* "afforded opportunity to show daring and imagination and suggested signs of a changing intellectual climate."[182] The import of *Ugetsu monogatari* as an early *yomihon* is too much to truly represent within the bounds of this paper, but it is an important aspect of the work to remember when considering it as a pinnacle *kaidan* work and the lasting influence it has had on Japanese literature.

Akinari was a celebrity within his own lifetime. His work had influence on other famous authors such as Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848) and Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761-1816), and he was heralded by Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749-1823) as "the outstanding writer of the day."[183] Furthermore, he was of the same academic lineage as Motoori Norinaga, and engaged in a well-publicized debate with his fellow *kokugaku* scholar on interpretations of certain sections of the *Kojiki*, Norinaga's specialty as discussed in the previous chapter.[184] Akinari was of a retiring nature, however, and generally considered unsociable. Reider argues that Akinari chafed against societal restrictions in Tokugawa Japan that disallowed men of talent like him from advancing in the world and instead favored those blessed by the accident of birth regardless of their qualifications. She claims that Akinari create his supernatural world as a way to redress

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[182] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 31.

[183] Ibid, 77-78.

[184] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 10.

grievances – right injustices, champion the oppressed – that he felt bitterly overpowered by in the real world. However, she simultaneously claims that Akinari valued the aesthetic emotional artistry of literature above didacticism. She combines these two ideas into the main theme of her text: that by writing Akinari hoped to gain the public recognition he felt he deserved as a way to mitigate his resentment over the societal restrictions placed upon him by his birth, using the already existing popular taste for *kaidan* as his tool.[185]

Akinari, however, had a difficult relationship with his own writing. He authored *Ugetsu* under the penname "Senshi Kinjin" or "The eccentric Mr. Cut-Finger," a reference to the malformation of his hands due to a childhood bout of smallpox, and never openly acknowledged that he was the author.[186] In 1807 he even went so far as to attempt to destroy his manuscripts.[187] However, he spent many years working on *Ugetsu* – in many ways it is rightfully considered his masterpiece. Utilizing ideas that had grabbed the popular imagination at the time, Akinari weaved together both Chinese and Japanese sources to create "a work of eerie beauty that represents the highest artistic level reached by the supernatural tale in Japan."[188] As Young affirms, Akinari must have been proud of his handiwork.

In the authorial preface to *Ugetsu monogatari*, Akinari implicitly compares his text to both *Genji monogatari* and the Chinese classic *Water Margin*. Reider claims that Akinari's comparison of his work to these two monoliths of East Asian literature reveals

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[185] Reider, *Tales*, 74-77.

[186] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 25.

[187] Ibid, 28.

[188] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 50.

his desire to write a work of similar worth and import.[189] Zolbrod and Young, however, take more nuanced views of the issue. Young argues that Akinari's claim is not entirely serious but instead points to his conscious efforts to revive classical texts as an attempt to revitalize the literature of his age.[190] Zolbrod, on the other hand, claims that Akinari's statement is more of a reflection of his views on the place of art, the role of fiction in society, and the intertwining of aesthetic and didactic purposes in literature, something Akinari believed the two works he mentioned epitomized.[191]

All of these facts attest to the possibility that Akinari's work may have had some amount of influence Reijo's own, although it would be foolhardy to claim a direct correspondence without further evidence. Two years after *Ugetsu monogatari*'s release, Arakida Reijo penned her own collection of fantastic tales, *Ayashi no yogatari*, and while Reijo never gained the contemporary or lasting fame that Akinari did, her work too reflects the literary atmosphere of the time. Little scholarship exists on *Ayashi no yogatari*, but much exists on *Ugetsu monogatari*, and considering the similarities between the two works and their completion dates being separated by only two years, it seems fruitful to study *Ugetsu* at least in a general sense as a way to consider *Ayashi no yogatari*.

As stated above, Chinese-inspired *kaidan* were very much in vogue when Akinari penned his collection. Chinese vernacular fiction was instrumental both in the development of *yomihon* and the popularity of *kaidan* in large part because of the air of

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[189] Reider, *Tales*, 79-80.

[190] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 52.

[191] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 50-51.

exoticism that Chinese source texts lent to Japanese works that drew from them. While

Japanese literature, among other arts, rarely extolled the virtues of originality and

creativity for their own sakes – instead emphasizing ideals of tradition, emulation, and

adaptation – nevertheless, art without some amount of innovation soon stagnates, and in

Chinese fiction, Japanese authors and audiences alike found just the novelty they desired.

Tsuga Teishō's *kaidan* collections, for example, drew heavily from Chinese sources;

indeed, according to Young, they were little more than translations of the original stories,

with characters often behaving in very un-Japanese-like ways. While Akinari was

inspired by his teacher, he was less bound by his often Chinese source texts, drawing

upon both Chinese and Japanese classical texts to create a more complete work of art that

overstepped the immaturity of Teishō's works.[192]

Reijo's collection, too, is heavily inspired by Chinese literature. Both Akinari and

Reijo made use of the highly popular Chinese collection *New Tales for the Trimmed

Lampwick*, among other sources, in their respective works. However, as Young points out,

although the Chinese influence in *Ugetsu monogatari* is very evident, one cannot

discount Akinari's debt to native literature, both classical and contemporary. Akinari

wrote *Ugetsu* during the height of *kaidan* popularity, and as such had a wealth of similar

texts to consult, many of them drawn from earlier Japanese materials.[193] Narrative prose

of the time was primarily drawn from either contemporary real life events or classical

history and literature, with Japanese texts such as the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (Collection of

Ten Thousand Leaves) holding particular sway over the *kokugakusha*, as seen in the

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[192] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 46-47.

[193] Ibid, 47.

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language of *Ugetsu monogatari*.[194] Furthermore, as previously stated, Akinari worked

diligently to weave together his Chinese and Japanese source material to create a whole

and balanced work. The same may be said of Reijo's *Ayashi no yogatari*. Like Akinari,

Reijo makes frequent use of allusion to a multiplicity of texts, both prose and poetry, not

only displaying her education but also grounding her work within the tradition of

Japanese literature.

The overarching structure of *Ugetsu monogatari* further binds it to traditions of

Japanese literary aesthetics. As Zolbrod suggests and Reider echoes, the structure of

*Ugetsu monogatari* is reminiscent of a full series of Noh plays, in which plays are

performed in a certain order such that their themes correspond to the following pattern:

Deity, Warrior, Woman, Miscellaneous, and Demon.[195] Both the overarching structure of

the series as a whole and the individual structure of a solitary play reflect the *jo-ha-kyū*

序破急 style of aesthetic development, which refers to the "speed" of the dramatic

structure – roughly a slow beginning, faster middle, and abrupt end. While the episodes

within *Ugetsu monogatari* reflect, from a Western perspective, a more Aristotelian style

of storytelling – relying heavily on plot and having a traceable beginning, middle, and

ending – as Zolbrod states, "Each story forms a unit, with meaning of its own, but taken

together the tales suggest an organic whole greater than the sum of its parts, like an

imperial anthology of court poetry, a sequence of linked verse, or a full program of

*nō*."[196] The structure of Reijo's *Ayashi no yogatari* as a whole is one question which will

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[194] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 66-67.

[195] Ibid, 73-74.

[196] Ibid, 73.

not be addressed in this thesis but begs further research. At thirty tales over eight volumes, Reijo's work is quite large for a collection of *kaidan*, far outstripping *Ugetsu monogatari*'s nine tales and five volumes. An analysis of all of the tales within *Ayashi no yogatari* would be fruitful not only because of their individual value but also because of what such a study might reveal about the structure of the work as a whole.

The question of why an author writes a particular work is always up for debate, and different studies on Akinari and *Ugetsu monogatari* have offered different perspectives. As mentioned above, Reider focuses on Akinari's desire for personal recognition. She also emphasizes his belief in the supernatural as an important factor both in his choice of subject matter and believability in writing.[197] Zolbrod argues in more artistic and didactic terms. While Akinari did have an undeniably strong belief in the supernatural and used *Ugetsu* as a teaching tool to that end, he strove "to balance artistic and utilitarian ends."[198] Young, on the other hand, dismisses Akinari's belief in the supernatural as common among people of that time. He does not hold up *Ugetsu monogatari* as the jewel of Akinari's career, but merely an important turning point, and discusses the work as Akinari's attempt to revitalize the literature of his age and recapture the spirit of older classics.[199]

Although even less is known about Reijo's motivations, from an examination of her life and work, many of the same statements can likely be made about her. She too strove to create a work of literary value, weaving together Chinese and Japanese source

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[197] Reider, *Tales*, 76.

[198] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 52.

[199] Young, *Ueda Akinari*, 52.

materials to fashion a coherent whole. Like Akinari, Reijo indirectly references a famous

piece of Japanese literature – *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 in her case – in the

authorial preface to *Ayashi no yogatari*, implicitly inviting the reader to compare the two

texts while seemingly downplaying her own: "I am all the more ashamed when I think

about that one man from long ago, 'Major Counselor so and so,' who wrote down and

collected stories from people just as they told them. My own work is far too worthless to

be compared to his in any way."[200] Sakaki posits that, unlike medieval female memoirists

who modeled their characters upon Shikibu's creations from *Genji monogatari*, Reijo

"made a conscious effort to become a latter-day Murasaki. [She] refused to embody

poetic essence and planned instead to construct *histoire* (in the sense of both history and

story)."[201] In the end, while Reider's statement about Akinari seeking societal recognition

of his abilities through writing is perhaps the most simplistic, it is possible that it could

apply to Reijo as well. If Akinari felt Tokugawa society closed many doors to him

because of his birth, how much more so was Reijo limited in social mobility as a woman?

Reijo's work is one of a woman both critical of common tropes of her day and yet

unintimidated to pursue art forms traditionally denied to her gender, desirous of her art

regardless of societal restrictions and yet not pugnaciously challenging authority at every

opportunity. Just so, the supernatural women in her stories break societal mores by their

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[200] まいて何の大納言とかやの世の物語とて、人々の聞えさするに従ひて、書き集め給ひし古の例に、おほけなく傚ふにもあらず。 Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 1. Reijo puts on a feminine pose of ignorance when referring to *Uji shūi monogatari*, or "A Collection of Tales from Uji," an early thirteenth century *setsuwa* collection based upon *Uji dainagon monogatari*, or "Tales of the Senior Counselor," an eleventh century collection now lost. *Uji shūi monogatari* is widely held as one of the best in the *setsuwa* genre, and enjoyed widespread publishing and considerable popularity in the Edo period. Shirane, *Agi Bridge*, 95.

[201] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 119.

unapologetic existence, and yet are not portrayed as maliciously disrupting the

community, but merely as continuing their day to day existence and pursuing their desires

as they will.

# CHAPTER 5

## ARAKIDA REIJO'S *AYASHI NO YOGATARI*

### 5.1 The Text as a Whole

*Ayashi no yogatari* is a collection of thirty tales written in 1778. Both the
Japanese National Diet Library and the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Book label
the text as *setsuwa* on their respective websites.[202] Given that *Ayashi no yogatari* was
written over four hundred years from the end of the period in which *setsuwa* are generally
agreed to have been written, this work does not seem to fit even the most basic definition
of the *setsuwa* genre. Beyond that, although *setsuwa* as a whole are not Buddhist tales,
they do contain an overwhelming influence of Buddhist didacticism, something that Reijo,
as a member of a Shinto priest family, avoided. Atsuko Sakaki, the leading English
language scholar on Reijo, addresses the claim of *Ayashi no yogatari* as a *setsuwa*
collection in her essay, "The Taming of the Strange:  Arakida Rei Reads and Writes
Stories of the Supernatural," stating that "the absence of didacticism may confute the
classification of Arakida's work as *setsuwa*."[203] Indeed, the tales which will be examined
in this paper carry no strong narrative voice or moralizing theme, nor the ending ethical
lesson so prevalent in *setsuwa*. Sakaki claims that *Ayashi no yogatari* exists "at the

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[202] Information on the National Diet Library's holdings of *Ayashi no yogatari* may be found at
http://iss.ndl.go.jp/books/R100000002-I000007275554-00. Information on the Union Catalogue's entries
may be found at http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/KTGSearch.cgi.

[203] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 152.

intersection of several existing genres," and is most often classified as *giko monogatari*.[204]

As a member of a Shinto priest family, Reijo separated herself to some extent from the Buddhist philosophy ubiquitous in Tokugawa society that taught that "an excess of emotional attachment" in women would lead to supernatural transformation.[205] Fumiko Jōo asserts that Reijo's "experiences as a woman of a Shintō priest family" distanced her from the popular Buddhist rhetoric and didacticism and "contributed to her indifference to the abolishment of the supernatural" from society.[206] Jōo also claims that Reijo herself disavowed religious motivations for writing *Ayashi no yogatari*, distancing herself from the Buddhist concept of *hōben* 方便, or expedient means.[207] Any criticism of her characters comes obliquely at the hands of other characters.[208] This lack of moralizing and didacticism frees Reijo from adherence to the cultural and religious norms of her time, allowing for her interesting treatment of supernatural women.[209]

Furthermore, unlike most *setsuwa*, the stories in *Ayashi no yogatari* tend to dispense with a strong narrative voice. Like many other Japanese authors, Reijo uses allusions to past works, Japanese and Chinese, liberally in *Ayashi no yogatari*. However, she often couches her quotations within the speech of her main characters. By attributing

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[204] Ibid.

[205] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 23.

[206] Ibid, 142-143.

[207] Kimbrough defines *hōben* as "words of simile and parable used to expound the doctrines for the sake of living beings," and "an untruth used to bring people to the Truth." Kimbrough, *Preachers*, 5.

[208] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 164.

[209] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 156.

literary quotes to her characters, often men of education themselves, instead of the narrator, Reijo is able to display her intelligence and education while simultaneously circumventing being too ostentatious in the display of her distinctly non-feminine expertise. Through her use of couched quotations, and further often derisive remarks about the pretention of her protagonists in making such allusions, Reijo is thus able to sidestep accusations of pedantry without having to sacrifice her art or play the part of the femininely ignorant woman.[210]

Although *Ayashi no yogatari* shares characteristics with many genres – for example, *giko monogatari* 擬古物語 (imitation classical tales), given the often Heian-esque setting of the tales and their linguistic style; *uta monogatari* 歌物語 (poem tales), given the myriad of poems within the stories, all written by Reijo herself; and *hon'an* 翻案 (adaptation), given the number of tales which draw directly from Chinese sources – the category it seems to fit mostly neatly into is that of *kaidan*. Not only was *Ayashi no yogatari* written in the heyday of *kaidan*, just two years after *Ugetsu monogatari*, but the characters for *kaidan* (怪談) appear in its title (怪世談).

As examined in chapter four, Reijo's work shares many characteristics with *Ugetsu monogatari*, often hailed as the pre-eminent example of *kaidan*. For example, both Reijo's and Akinari's tales bear an obvious influence from Chinese colloquial tales, a fad of the time, favored by the masses for adding "exoticism" to popular fiction. Although Reijo's work is quite a bit longer than Akinari's, both are anthology works with individual tales being of a similarly short length, and the tales in both collections rely

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[210] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 161.

heavily on a traceable logical plot with rising and falling action rather than the *kokugakusha*-favored, feminine, emotional, and "natural and immediate" variety of story-telling. On that note, the tales lack the sense of "personal-ness" sought after in the *nikki* genre and which Norinaga held up as truly Japanese, instead focusing outward from the self, on the supernatural and foreign, with the self only rarely appearing in the guise of the narrator – if the narrator may truly be said to represent the self at all. Furthermore, both authors employ various allusions to traditionally acclaimed works in the literary tradition of Japan and China, reflecting both Akinari's and Reijo's high level of learning. Finally, like *Ugetsu monogatari*, while the stories in *Ayashi no yogatari* are not always frightening, they are always strange and involve the supernatural, creating an atmosphere of otherworldliness. Reijo even seems to reference *Ugetsu monogatari* in the authorial preface to her work:

> "My incoherent work – which I wrote within the quiet sound of spring rain running down the plants on the eaves and on those truly long autumn nights when dawn seemed like it would never come and I would sit up writing in the light of the remaining fragment of the last candle – I call it 'Tales of the Uncanny,' for the tales are truly strange, the events described not the doings of ordinary laypeople."[211]

In the preface to *Ugetsu monogatari*, Akinari states that he completed his work "when the rain cleared away and the moon shone faintly by my window," thus conceiving of the title for his work, *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*.[212] Reijo mentions "spring rain," and although she does not directly reference the moon, any reader familiar with literary

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[211] 忍草に傳ふ玉水の音静なる春雨のうち、正に長しといふめる秋の夜の明かしがたに、寐覺の折毎に殘んの燈火を挑げ盡して、そこはかとなく書付けぬるを、あやしの世談とかいへるも、まことにあやし、現人の仕業などいふべくもあらず。Translations are the author's own unless otherwise noted. Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 2.

[212] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 97.

tradition in Japan will immediately connect the phrase "autumn nights" to the moon as a long-held conventional poetic image.

While *Ayashi no yogatari* might not fit into the category of *setsuwa*, it nevertheless was heavily influenced by its literary forbearers, as *kaidan* was itself an outgrowth of *setsuwa*. The negative treatment of women in even secularized *kaidan*, along with the use in Buddhist sermons and writings in the Tokugawa period of such stories involving supernatural women and metamorphosis, bears striking resemblance to *setsuwa* and their place in Buddhist tradition, particularly as relates to the concept of *fujōkan*. Jōo claims that Reijo was "critical of the religious discourse on negative femininity," and indeed her treatment of supernatural women brings a unique perspective to the issue.[213] However, while Reijo's presentation of supernatural women in her work differs from the general view in the Tokugawa period, and is interesting as such for what it reveals of her character, it is not a marked revolutionary departure from her culture or contemporaries. In his biography on Akinari, Zolbrod claims that Akinari, like many intellectuals in the eighteenth century, had little practical use for Buddhism, believing that "Buddhism as a religion was useless and that the clergy was degenerate." Nonetheless, he continues, Buddhism formed such an important foundational basis for Japanese society, even in literary aesthetics, that Akinari could not escape the effect of the religion in his writings.[214] The same may be said of Reijo, who even in seeking to avoid Buddhist pedantry could not strip her work entirely of Buddhist cultural influence, even in her treatment of female characters.

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[213] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 167.

[214] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 48.

## 5.2 "The Savage with the Flying Head"

The plot of the nineteenth tale of *Ayashi no yogatari*, "The Savage with the Flying Head" (Hitōban 飛頭蛮), is based off of an entry in *Sou-shen Chi* – published in English as *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* – a Chinese text generally agreed to have been compiled by historian Kan Pao (fl.317-322) in the 4th century.[215] This text does not have an overarching plot, instead being made up of multiple pseudo-historical entries about supernatural beings and happenings in early Chinese history. The entry, number 12,306, entitled "The Tribe with Flying Heads," describes a tribe of savages whose heads are capable of detaching from their bodies and flying around using their ears as wings. One General Chu Huan captures a girl from the tribe and keeps her in his household, but when her secret is eventually discovered, he sends her back to her people.[216]

In "The Savage with the Flying Head," Reijo describes a normal Japanese household suddenly thrown into uproar because of the appearance of a young female servant whose head detaches itself and flies off at night. The governor of Mutsu Province returns from the capital to find a new young serving girl in his employ. However, unlike the character in the source text which inspired this tale, the girl in Reijo's text is hardly a savage, instead described as beautiful and refined, capturing the hearts of everyone in the household. The use of "savage" in the title provides an interesting contrast to the lengthy description Reijo provides of the girl's distinctly civilized qualities which endear her to all those she meets. The governor's wife is especially taken with her charm, and the

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[215] DeWoskin, *Search*, xxv-xxvi.

[216] Ibid, 147.

governor soon finds himself pining after the girl, until one night he sneaks down to her room to see her. Finding her sleeping alone on a veranda, he approaches her behind her sleeping screen, only to find that she has no head:

> The governor was ecstatic, and his heart beat faster as he drew closer. "She must be sleeping very deeply," he thought without suspicion. He pushed back the blankets covering her, but he could see only faintly by the dim light that filtered through the gaps in the folding screen that stood around her bed. While the girl's skin was warm, and didn't feel strange at all, in the weak light it looked like she didn't have a head. "How strange! Are my eyes mistaken?" the governor thought, but he still could not see very clearly. He raised the cloth a bit more, and truly the girl was headless.[217]

Thinking the girl has been murdered, the governor is panic-stricken and afraid of what rumors might flow if he is found with her in such a state. He hurriedly leaves without telling anyone, but the next morning, however, the girl appears completely unharmed. Puzzled and even more afraid, the governor visits the girl again that night and confirms what he had seen – she is indeed lying headless, but the day after that once again appears unharmed:

> At last the morning dawned. People in the household had gotten up and were bustling about, but still the governor had heard no outcry. He hurriedly got up and went to investigate, but the girl in question was sitting innocently in the kitchen. The governor was bewildered, and he stared at the girl fixedly for a moment, but she was the same as always, just a normal human woman. He felt uneasy and wondered, "Was last night all some kind of terrible dream?" It stood against reason, and his heart beat loudly in his chest. However, there was no one for the governor to confide in, and he said nothing even to his wife. Instead, undaunted, he thought to himself, "I'll try again tonight," and spent the day waiting. That night, when he found the girl in the same state as he had the previous night, it was even more eerie. The governor said to himself, "Is she some kind of changeling?" His heart, which before had been so charmed by the girl,

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[217] 守いと嬉しく心ともめきして、やをら近う傳寄れど、いと善く寐入りつるにや驚く事もなし。上なる衣を押遣れどやともいはず。几帳の透間より通る火影も、殊におごおごしきに見れば、肌は温にて疎ましうもなけれど、頭は無きやうなり。いと怪しう、ひがめにやと思へど、心許なければ、帷を少し上げてみるに、誠になし。Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 130.

turned against her. He found her only frightening now, and so thinking he returned to his rooms.[218]

Soon after these events, the household is awakened early when the governor's infant son becomes ill. The girl is not present, however, and a few other servants go looking for her. Like the governor before them, they are shocked to find her lying without a head. At first they worry that there is a murderer on the loose, and quickly send word to the village. Having encountered this before, however, the governor holds back. Soon "the girl's head flew in from the sky, coming from who knows where, using its ears as wings and looking like some kind of grotesque bird."[219] The servants are terrified and throw themselves prostrate, but the governor simply draws his sword and sits down to watch. The head flies to the pillows where the girl's headless body lies, and after a moment she awakens. Apparently unaware of what has happened, she is shocked and embarrassed to find so many people in her room. Suddenly, despite all her previously elaborated merits, the girl has become the "savage" of the title, and the people in the household who had formerly adored her are now terrified and disgusted, their enchantment for her refinement and charms turned to base fascination with the grotesque.

The governor, having never encountered anything like the girl, consults his books of Chinese learning, while the following night, a few of his men sneak into the girl's room:

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[218] からうじて明けぬ。人々起出でぬるやうなれど、又聞ゆる事もなし。守も急ぎ起きて見るに、女例の様にて何心なく厨屋の方に居たり。守いと怪みて、とばかり打まぼりつるに、變りたる様にもあらず、唯世の常なり。訝かしう、夜べ我如何なる夢を見つるならんと思うも、あやなくて胸打騒ぎたり。されど人にいふべきならねば北の方にさへ聞こえず、心の中には、暮れにこそはと懲りずまに待渡るめり。其夜も同じことなりければ愈世つかず、變化の者にやと思ひなるには、らうたく覺えし心も引かへ、むくつけうさへなりてとみに歸りぬ。Ibid.

[219] 何國よりともなく、空より彼女の頭、耳を翼のやうにて、鳥か何ぞとまがふばかり飛來れる物か。Ibid, 131.

That night, a couple of men went together and called on the girl. Her head was gone, as per usual, and they fixed a blanket over her shoulders, covering her neck. At dawn, her head returned, and without a place to attach itself to fell to the ground. The head seemed to be in such pain from the separation that the men thought the girl might die. They quietly pulled away the cloth covering her neck, and the head finally reattached itself.[220]

It is revealed that the girl indeed has no idea about her head's nightly excursions, and the governor even feels pity upon seeing her so frightened and upset by all the tumult directed at her. The girl lived in the capital for some time before coming to work in the Mutsu governor's household, and although her employers never seemed to find fault with her work, after she had worked for them for a period of time, their manner always suddenly changed and they would fire her without explanation. She is afraid that the governor's wife, who had previously looked at her so kindly, has discovered the governor's flirtations, and the girl leaves the house in shame, leaving behind a single *waka* verse written on the screen door in her room:

| | |
|---|---|
| 名もつらき | Hedge island – |
| 籬が島の | I thought it was a shelter, |
| 舍とて | But even the name is harsh, |
| かくて隔つる | And as you can see, it's become |
| 道と成りぬる[221] | A road of separation |

"Will even you remember me, cypress pillar?"[222,223]

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[220] 其夜は男一二人率て行きて窺ふに、さきざきの様なれば、やがて肩の邊に、衣を掩はせつつ見るに、暁頭歸りて術なげに轉びなどして、堪へがたげなるは、死ぬべきにやと覺ゆれば、やをら衣を取除けつるに、則ちそこに着きぬ。Ibid.

[221] Ibid, 132.

[222] "眞木の柱はと…" Ibid. The line – only a fragment in the original text – is a reference to chapter 31 of *Genji monogatari*, "*Makibashira*: The Handsome Pillar." When the Commander of the Right, Higekuro, begins an affair with the Mistress of the Staff, Tamakazura, his malcontent wife empties a brazier of ashes over his head. Afterwards, she and her daughter are both forced to leave their residence, at which point the daughter, unhappy to leave her childhood home, leaves a *waka* on a cypress pillar on the east side of the house on which she often leaned. It reads as follows: "I am leaving now a home that has long been mine: O handsome pillar, you whom I have loved so well, please do not forget me yet!" The mother responds in

Magaki island (translated above as "hedge island") appears in both the third

imperial *waka* anthology, the *Shūishū* 拾遺集[224] and Tokugawa period poet and author

Matsuo Bashō's 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694) *Oku no hosomichi* 奥の細道 (Narrow Road to

the Interior).[225] On the other hand, the image of leaving a poem on a paper sliding door is

itself a reference to the famous Giō scene in *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (The Tale of

the Heike).[226] This is one of only three times that the flying-head girl speaks in the story,

and the only time she speaks without an immediate addressee. *Waka* exchanges bookend

her affair with the governor, with the pair of them exchanging verses first to indicate their

mutual interest and once again later, soon after the aforementioned scene, to mark the end

of their unconsummated and unhappy affair. As this scene when the flying-head girl

leaves a *waka* before leaving her home in disgrace is some of the most direct access Reijo

kind: "That handsome pillar may still recall your love, but what then? I ask: what is it I leave behind that could ever make me stay?" Tyler trans., *The Tale of Genji*, 533-534.

[223] Sakaki translates this section as follows: "An attendant on Fence Island – even the name sounds alienating. The place has presented me a path of separation. Cypress pillar, may I rely on you not to forget me?" Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 168.

[224] The Shūishū poems, number 1055, reads as follows:

| 卯の花の | Where the hareflower blooms |
|---|---|
| 咲ける垣根は | In its hedgerows, how it seems |
| 陸奥の | One must be gazing |
| 籬の島の | At the white waves round the isle |
| 浪かとそ見る | Of Magaki in Michinoku |

For original text, see Komachiya, *Shūiwakashū*, 28. For translation, see Cranston, *A Waka Anthology, Vol. 2*, 370.

[225] "The sky of summer rains cleared a bit, and under the dim evening moon, Magaki Island seemed quite near. Fishing boats rowed in, and at the sound of the men dividing the catch, I could feel the heart of the poet who wrote of 'the sadness as they are pulled ashore' – it was so deeply moving." Barnhill, *Bashō's Journey*, 60.

[226] "Even those who have only sought shelter under the same tree for a night or have merely dipped water from the same stream will feel sorrow on parting. How sorrowful, then, Giō's departure must have been from the place where she had lived these three years…Perhaps wanting to leave behind some reminder of herself, she inscribed the following powem on the sliding panel of the room, weeping as she did so: 'Those that put out new shoots, those that wither are the same, grasses of the field – come autumn, is there one that will not fade?'" Watson, *The Tales of the Heike*, 19.

gives the readers to her heroine's thoughts, it is interesting that she draws a comparison between the flying-head girl and the famously downtrodden Giō, especially considering that, unlike Taira no Kiyomori – the villain of Giō's story – the governor is not presented as an antagonist but is in fact the character the reader is given most access to and thus most able to identify with. We as readers see his regrets, remorse, and changing feelings for the girl, and sympathize with both characters.

Although the narration clings to the Mutsu governor, as the main character, the reader is informed rather briefly of the girl's ultimate fate. After leaving the Mutsu governor's household, the girl next seeks employment in the household of the governor of Dewa province, but soon meets her untimely demise when her flying head is discovered: "They placed a copper basin over her pillow, and when her head tried to return, it was stymied by the obstruction, flying to and fro. Night ended without the head having attached itself, and the girl died."[227] The story ends with an unusual narratorial aside where Reijo's narrator decries the unnecessary death of the girl:

> "That she should have ended this way is such a waste. The girl's beauty was such that, wherever she was, no matter how unrefined the people around her, no one could help but love her. That being the case, how much more must her family have loved her? It's such a shame."[228]

On the surface, Reijo's story seems little different from the myriad *kaidan* written in the same period. However, her treatment of the girl with the flying head bears further inspection. As previously stated, the stories in *Ayashi no yogatari* rarely have a strong

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[227] 銅の盥を枕の程に置きたりければ、頭の歸らんやうなくて、迷ひけるが、さて明放れしかば、終に其ままにて、息繼れけりとなん。Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 133.

[228] 何所の國にも、容などまほに美しかりつれば、むくつけき方はあれど、あへなく見なしては、誰も誰も憐れがりつるに、まいて親兄弟など、いかさまにか思うらんと、いといとほしうこそ。Ibid.

narratorial presence. Thus, the ending lines in "The Savage with the Flying Head" when the narrator evokes sympathy for the flying-head girl and her family stand out. Whether or not their cause is just or their character sympathetic, supernatural women in *kaidan* are often used merely as tools to caution men and sometimes other women. Ultimately, their sympathetic nature stems from the tragedy of them having fallen prey so deeply to negative emotions that they transform into monstrosities and doom themselves to hell. Their cause is never "just" enough to save them from ultimate punishment. While supernatural women are sometimes thus presented sympathetically, as in Akinari's "The Cauldron of Kibitsu," nevertheless they still exist primarily as didactic tools. Akinari even opens his tale with a warning against the dangers of a "jealous wife," who even if she does not cause "genuine calamity" will still bring down destruction and shame upon her husband: "Since ancient times the poison of jealousy has stricken untold multitudes of men."[229] It was common for Zen Buddhist priests to use such stories of women overcome by jealousy to the point of physical transformation as part of their proselytizing activities in early Tokugawa Japan.[230] However, as previously stated, Reijo stayed her hand from inserting religious morals into her stories, and thus in "The Savage with the Flying Head," the girl's uncanny physicality is monstrous not because of some implied religiosity but simply because of its terrifying and unusual nature. Sakaki suggests that Reijo inserts the ending lines from the narrator as a way to ensure that readers feel pity and sympathy for the flying-head girl rather than fear and disgust.[231]

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[229] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 149.

[230] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 136.

[231] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 169.

The scene when the governor sneaks into the girl's room for a midnight tryst but is instead horrified, stripped of all sexual desire, to find the girl in her true state – headless – is reminiscent of countless scenes in *setsuwa* which teach the concept of *fujōkan*. For example, one story in *Konjaku monogatari-shū* features a young man who is so overcome with longing for his dead wife that he opens her coffin, only to find her rotting and putrid corpse. The sight of such putrefaction ultimately leads him to take the tonsure. The wife's religious status is unknown, but even after death she is used as a passive object for her husband's enlightenment[232] In another tale, this one from *Hosshinshū*, a monk falls in love with a high-class lady and begs her husband to be allowed to see her. The husband relents, but the monk merely stares at the woman for several hours before eventually leaving. Although as Pandey points out, little emphasis is given to the woman's actual physical appearance, the implication is that the monk was able to see through her outer artifice of beauty and into the true impurity underneath, evidence of his enlightened state.[233] Finally, in the story from *Kankyo no tomo* mentioned in chapter three about the woman who simulates decay to teach the monk who has fallen in love with her about *fujōkan*, once again, though the woman is clearly wise and understands Buddhist doctrine, her religious status is unknown and she acts merely as an agent for the monk's ultimate benefit.

However, as evidenced above, while the governor certainly loses whatever sexual desire and even goodwill he had for the girl upon discovering her true nature, no moral lesson is appended to this. Furthermore, there is no implication that the governor has shed

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[232] Pandey, "Desire," 204.

[233] Ibid, 205-206.

*all* of his sexual appetites, merely the feelings he once held for the flying-head girl, and quite understandably so. He feels human compassion for the girl once he overcomes his initial shock, but his desire for her is gone. The twenty-second tale, "Floating Weeds," adapted from the Chinese "Tale of the Peony Lantern," contains a similar scene in which the protagonist is shocked by the true form of his lover and in that moment loses all desire for her, but is ultimately reunited with her in the end. Although the heroine in "The Savage with the Flying Head" is given little interiority, the narrator clearly sympathizes with her and causes her readers to sympathize with her, rather than fear her, as well. While she is not the main character, taking backstage to the governor even though being the more interesting character, she is clearly the most important character, a pitiful figure readers identify with in her own right rather than simply a moral bludgeon used to further the male character's development.

### 5.3 "Floating Weeds"

"Floating Weeds" is Reijo's adaptation of the famous Chinese tale "The Story of the Peony Lantern." Popularized first by Ryōi's version of the text and later by that of the famous *rakugo* 落語 (comic storytelling) performer Sanyūtei Enchō 三遊亭圓朝 (1839-1900), the tale has had lasting popularity throughout Japan as a classic *kaidan*. "Floating Weeds" tells the tale of a young playboy who falls in love with a mysterious woman, whom he meets one evening when he goes for a walk hoping to escape the summer heat:

> "The person approaching him was a young woman. Her child servant
> walked before her holding fireflies in the sleeves of her thin garment, light
> leaking out beautifully from the fine cloth. No one else accompanied her.
> A woman out wandering like that, without any companion besides her

servant – what kind of libertine was she, to follow her own passions against all propriety?"[234]

The woman's appearance is reminiscent of poem 209 from the second imperial *waka* anthology, the *Gosenshū* 後撰集, itself a reference to episode 40 of *Yamato monogatari* 大和物語 (Tales of Yamato).[235] In the *Gosenshū* poem, Princess Katsura orders her maidservant to catch fireflies and hold them in the sleeves of her robe.[236]

Although in both Reijo's story and the *Gosenshū* poem, the servant is never explicitly identified as female, the servant in the source text for "Floating Weeds," the Chinese story "The Tale of the Peony Lantern," is a young girl, as is the character in Ryōi's version, and thus it seems safe to assume that the servant in Reijo's story is also female. Furthermore, the image in "Floating Weeds" of a beautiful woman and young servant walking together with no other accompaniment calls to mind a similar pair from Akinari's tale "The Lust of the White Serpent" in *Ugetsu monogatari*. In Akinari's tale, a beautiful young noblewoman and her teenaged maidservant take shelter from a storm in the same fisherman's hut where the protagonist, Toyoo, stopped to wait for the rain to pass moments before. Toyoo is struck both by the woman's, Manago's, appearance and

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[234] 此方ざまに來るは若き女なり。先に立てる童薄物の袖に螢を包みたるが透影をかしう見ゆ。又人をも具せず、うかれ歩くは如何なるすきものならん。Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 147.

[235] Tahara, *Tales of Yamato*, 23.

[236] The preface to the poem reads, "'Catch me some fireflies,' Princess Katsura ordered her maidservant, who proceeded to wrap them in the sleeve of her trailing robe かつらのみこの、ほたるをとらへて、といひ侍りけれは、わらはのかさみのそてにつつみて." The poem itself is as follows:

| つつめども | Wrap it as I may, |
| 隠れぬ物は | It can never be concealed, |
| 夏虫の | The yearning fire |
| 身よりあまれる | From the summer insect flowing, |
| 思ひなりけり | Too great for its body to hold. |

For original text, see Katagiri, *Gosenwakashū*, 65. For translation, see Cranston, *A Waka Anthology, Vol. 2*, 259.

her apparently noble status, thinking that he had "never heard of such a splendid lady living nearby…But it's certainly unusual that she has no man to accompany her."[237] In the end, both Manago and Maroya, her servant girl, are revealed to be white serpents who drive Toyoo from his home and threaten his very life with their obsession for him, and it is only with the help of a local abbot that Toyoo is able to escape their clutches.

In "The Lust of the White Serpent," Toyoo is described as "struck by [Manago's] ethereal beauty" and "utterly bewitched" in their first meeting. Even by the next day he sleeps fitfully and is "disturbed and agitated."[238] The romance in "Floating Weeds" begins more pleasantly, but in this story too the man senses something abnormal about the woman before anything untoward is revealed about her, a common trend in stories with supernatural women. The night the pair meet – the two are never named, and referred to only as the man and the woman – they exchange several *waka* verses as way of courtship. The woman appears coy and humble, comparing herself to "grass without roots" and lamenting that the man, like "shallow water," can probably not be trusted to take care of her.[239] The man, however, is already thoroughly smitten, though he admits that something about the woman seems odd: "Although the woman seemed slightly strange, she was lovely in face and figure. The man was struck by her beauty and could

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[237] Ueda, *Ugetsu monogatari*, 162.

[238] Ibid, 164.

[239] 女、根をたえし草にはありともさそふてふ水の淺みは流れしもせじ。Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 147.

not simply pass her by."[240] In the end, the woman succumbs to the man's charms and

accompanies him back to his home.

Although the relationship is not described as perfect, as time goes on, the man

finds himself falling in love with the woman, and the woman seems to return his

feelings.[241] However, there are hints that the woman is hiding from people: she refuses to

be seen during the day and always leaves her lover's home before morning, despite his

pleas for her to stay. Furthermore, the woman does not told the man where she lives. This

worries the man, who, in the style of Heian romances, writes *waka* verses for her the next

morning, but cannot send them to her. Eventually, however, as their feelings deepen, they

set up household together as a married couple, although, "the woman was by nature

deeply modest and reserved, and wouldn't venture out onto the veranda even for a

moment."[242] The pair are thoroughly attached to each other, and the man even sheds his

former flirtatious habits.

They live happily for some time until one day the elderly neighbor of the

protagonist, peeks[243] through the gaps in the bamboo fence between their houses. The old

man attempts to catch site of the protagonist several times, having not heard from the

man for some time, but the house appears almost abandoned, with the inhabit secreted

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[240] 様かはりては見れど、顔容勝れて、美しの人やと目とまるままに、見過ぐしがたくて Ibid.
[241] 女こよなしと思へるさまなり。Reijo often describes the woman's thoughts and feelings indirectly – "she seemed to think he was very attractive" – as in this passage. The reader is consistently given direct access, however, to the man's thoughts and feelings. Ibid, 148.
[242]女は物深うおくまりたる本性にて、 あからさまに出づる事もせず Ibid, 150.

[243] *Kaimami* 垣間見, the term in question, (literally, "to look through the gap in the fence") is a common plot device in Heian court literature, and thus it is unsurprising that Reijo utilizes it given her education in the classics and  pseudo-classical style of writing in *Ayashi no yogatari*.

away inside. One day, however, the old man hears the sound of a *koto*, and when he peeks over into the protagonist's house, he is shocked to find that the man is not alone:

> Although the man didn't look especially different from normal, he seemed somehow unwell, very pale and weak. The thing sitting across from the man, however, wasn't human at all. Her head especially was horrible. She was like a thing long dead, wearing beautiful clothes and plucking at the *koto* while she sat. The page sitting next to her was the same.[244]

The old neighbor is horrified, but remains calm; he understands right away that the thing in the protagonist's house must be some creature who has put a spell on the man and confronts the man right away. At first the protagonist does not believe his neighbor's story, but when eventually at the urging of the old man, the man too peeks through the wall at the woman he has fallen in love with, he discovers her true nature: "The woman in question and her servant both, they weren't people at all. The man was understandably terrified."[245] Just like the governor in "The Savage with the Flying Head," in that instant, the man is stripped of all desire for his lover and even fears to return to his home while the woman still sits there waiting for him.

The protagonist spends the night at the old man's house, and heads to a local mountain temple the next day, where the priest informs him of the danger to his life, prays over him, and offers incantations and a talisman of protection, similar to Toyoo seeking rescue from Manago in "Lust of the White Serpent." The man returns home, and life returns to normal for a time, with no sign of the woman. One day, however, the progatonist goes out for a stroll to admire the autumnal scenery, and just as in their first

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[244] 男は日頃にかはらねど悩ましげにて、いといたう青みそこなはれたり。さし向ひつるは、更に人にはあらで、頭などもいとうとましげに、死して年經にし人の、麗しき衣どもなよよかに着て、琴をまさくり居つ。側なる童めくものも、同じ容なり。Ibid, 152.

[245] "正身も童も二人ながら人ならず、いと恐しなどもいへば世の常なり。" Ibid, 153.

meeting, he comes upon the woman and her servant. The woman is deeply distressed by

her abandonment, and her love for the man seems even deeper than before. The man is

afraid at first, suddenly forgetting all of the precautions the priest had taught him, but

soon finds that his feelings for the woman have not changed at all, and instead if anything

have deepened. When the man does not return home for several days, the elderly

neighbor goes searching for him, eventually calling on a nearby temple:

> "There was a large coffin in the hallway and two smaller ones next to it.
> Was that the hem of the man's kimono peeking out from the large coffin?
> The old man was suspicious, and when he asked the priests, they opened
> up the coffin to look inside. The body in the coffin was indeed the old
> man's young neighbor, now nothing more than an empty corpse. The old
> man was grief-stricken. "Oh, how frightful," he said, but there was
> nothing he could do. He found the entire ordeal unnatural, and asked the
> priests about the other coffins.
>
> 'This was the daughter of a nobleman, and in the other coffin is the page
> who served her. In this world, anything can happen. The woman and her
> servant both passed away during a time of endless warfare, and as such it
> was impossible to properly commemorate their burial. Thus, they were
> entrusted to our temple. Since then, however, the woman's relatives have
> all disappeared, and so the bodies remain here in our care,' the priests
> said."[246]

The old man returns home, dejected and empty-handed, and the story ends with the

revelation that "from then on, on dreary evenings, the man too accompanied the woman

and her servant when they went out, all three figures looking just like they did in life only

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[246] 郎の方に大きなる棺、又側に小きと二つあり。其大きなる棺の中より彼男の衣のつま出づる
ものか、訝しう僧達に聞こえつつ、試みに開けて見るに、死したる人の屍さながらいて、男も同
じごと入り居つつ、空しき骸にてあるなりけり。翁いと淺ましなどもいひやらん方もなく、世づ
かぬ心地して、僧達に事のよしを問ふに、是は貴き人の姫君にて、かたへなるは仕うまつりし童
なり。世の中に事出来て、戦隙なかりし程に失ひ給ひしかば、葬など営まんよしもなくて、此處
に預け置きつつ、其後親族の人々皆行方なくなり給ひしにより、さてあるなりと語りつ。Ibid,
156.

shadowy, terrifying and otherworldly. Many people encountered their ghostly presence."[247]

## 5.4 Reijo's Treatment of Women in *Ayashi no yogatari*

"Floating Weeds" is in essence little different from other versions of the "Peony Lantern" story, but varies noticeably in atmosphere and implication. While in "The Savage with the Flying Head" the narrator expresses pity for the death of the supernatural girl, in "Floating Weeds," rather than being banished from the community, the supernatural woman is allowed to exist in her ghostly form, receiving neither punishment nor redemption. This marks a departure from the norm for *kaidan*, and is particularly noteworthy in "Floating Weeds." In the original Chinese version of the tale, the man dies after learning of the true state of his lover. Afterwards, the pair haunts the neighborhood, causing any who see them to grow sick and die, until ultimately being judged and sent to hell by a Daoist priest.[248] In Ryōi's version of the tale, the man, Ogihara, is a widower, increasing the tragedy of his bewitchment and ultimate death. As in Reijo's version, though he briefly escapes the woman's clutches, in the end, she quite literally draws him to his death. In death, the pair haunts the area, causing all those who encounter them to fall ill, until their former neighbors gather to recite the Lotus Sutra and offer sutra copies to pacify their restless spirits.[249] Although the couple are not damned to hell as they are in the Chinese original story, and Ryōi focuses more on the emotions of the affair than the

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[247] かくて後は、物淋しき夕暮など、男も打連れて、三人ながらありしばかりの姿にて、影のやうに顕れ出で歩くを、其邊にて見る人數多侍りとか、いと恐ろしう世づかぬ事なりき。Ibid, 157.
[248] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 153-154.

[249] Asai, *The Peony Lantern*.

moral implications, nevertheless in Ryōi's version the woman and ultimately the man as well do cause harm to their community and are not, even cannot, be allowed to exist as they are. As Jōo notes, "In both [the original and Ryōi's version]…the supernatural couple is removed from the realm of human beings for the greater good of the community"[250] Conversely, in Reijo's version of the tale, the man's choice to be with the woman is made more obvious, rather than him seeming to have been bewitched. Jōo affirms that "an emphasis on the mutual affection between the couple disallows portrayal of the male protagonist as a poor victim of the demonic ghost woman."[251] And in the end, although the ghostly couple's existence is frightening, they do not maliciously haunt the area or cause illness or death. Bringing no harm onto their neighbors, the couple is neither punished nor redeemed but merely allowed to exist.

As stated, Reijo's ambivalent treatment of supernatural women stands out when compared to other writings of the same period. Traditionally, a union between a man and a supernatural being can end only in suffering. For example, in the tale "How Kaya no Yoshifuji of Bitchū Province Became the Husband of a Fox and Was Saved by Kannon" in *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (16:17), the titular Yoshifuji is bewitched by a fox in the shape of a human woman. He marries her and even bears a son by her. In the end, his neighbors find him under a storehouse, where he had been living for the past thirteen days, although he believes it to have been more like thirteen years. Although the space had seemed like a mansion to Yoshifuji, he discovers in reality that it is little more than four or five inches high. He is only able to escape his uncanny captivity by the

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[250] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 154.

[251] Ibid, 155.

intervention of Kannon who forces Yoshifuji away from the foxes for his own safety.[252] This kind of tale is common throughout Japanese literature, and indeed, in the *Konjaku* tale, the man's neighbors are dumbfounded by his odd behavior until they discover that it is due to a fox's spell. In "Floating Weeds," however, even though the man is seemingly drained of life by the woman's presence – seen in his paleness when his neighbor spies on the pair – and eventually loses his life to her, the couple seems to enjoy their union, living "happily ever after" in death, as it were. The man is not punished for breaking societal taboos, nor the woman for holding onto her desire for love even after death. The lack of punishment, according to Jōo, is something contemporary readers "would have immediately noticed:"[253] "Reijo's indifference to the notion of eliminating the uncanny from the human community suggests that she was not concerned with retaining the didactic lessons that frequently appeared in Edo-period ghost tales."[254]

As stated above, Reijo stresses the mutual affection between the man and the woman in "Floating Weeds," in contrast to Ryōi's version, for example, in which the woman's emotions are mostly hidden from the reader, thus making her seem more villainous for her part in her lover's death, even though he presents the couple's story more sympathetically than the original source text. The more emotionally nuanced presentation of the woman in Reijo's tales combined with the emphasis on their reciprocated feelings changes the man and woman's relationship from a villain/victim dichotomy to a tragic romance doomed from the beginning. Once again, according to Jōo,

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[252] Shirane, "Agi Bridge," 51-54.

[253] Jōo, "Peony Lantern," 142.

[254] Ibid, 155.

the emphasis on "the reciprocated love between the ghost heroine and the aristocratic man…nullif[ies] the heroine's crime of leading her lover to his death and moving away from portraying him as the passive victim of the demonic woman."[255] The woman does not steal the man's life so much as he freely gives it to her; she never threatens or menaces the man and is often described as fragile and totally dependent upon her lover.

In most *kaidan* and *setsuwa*, the kind of attachment the woman shows towards the man would be considered a sin from a Buddhist perspective and inevitable lead to punishment and anguish, often in the form of a horrifying metamorphosis; however, the woman's transformation – from the readers' perspective – that follows is not born out of negative attachment or jealousy but instead is her natural state, just as the flying-head girl's malady is insinuated to be her original form. Throughout the story, the man views the woman with love and compassion, even when he finds her behavior strange, and although he is initially terrified upon the revelation of her true form, in the end his love is reignited, and the pair are reunited for eternity. Similarly, the girl in "The Savage with the Flying Head," although terrifying in form, is an innocent, even seemingly unaware of her nightly affliction. Although first a temptress and then a site of impurity and revulsion, the girl in and of herself poses no threat to the household in which she works except for fear, like the ghostly couple toward their neighborhood, and the narrator rightly expresses pity over her wrongful death in the end.

However, Reijo's unique treatment of supernatural women does not indicate a complete freedom from the sexism embedded in her culture, and in many of the tales in *Ayashi no yogatari* the women are given little agency or interiority. In "The Savage with

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[255] Ibid, 184.

the Flying Head," the girl with the flying head only speaks three times, and is only ever referred to as "woman." In fairness to Reijo, none of the characters in the stories examined in this paper are named, but the male characters at least often receive titles or, baring that as in "Floating Weeds," are given more development and interiority. While the side female characters in the two stories are referred to by their roles – the governor's wife and the child page – the main heroines are both consistently only referred to as "woman" (女). The primary female character in the first tale in *Ayashi no yogatari*, "Lam Tin," also never speaks and exists only as a prize for the main male character to win through marriage, a tangible representation of the reversal of his previous ill-fortune.[256] The heroine in "Floating Weeds" does speak, though primarily in poetry, and she is in general a much stronger and more developed character than the others mentioned above; however, her thoughts and feelings are often mediated to the reader through the use of phrases like "it seemed," while the male main character's emotions are revealed directly. Furthermore, in both of the stories examined here, among many others, although the women are the most important characters, the main characters are all men, rather like the meta-relationship between Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*. It is the male characters who are given interiority and thus those characters that Reijo seems to align herself more closely with. While Reijo herself was a scholar, only her male characters are educated and intelligent themselves. Although the heroine of "Floating Weeds" is more strongly developed than some of Reijo's other heroines, nevertheless she still bases her actions on emotions – her love and desire for the male protagonist – rather than intellect.

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[256] Arakida, *Ayashi no yogatari*, 1-4.

Sakaki claims that Reijo's education put her in a difficult social category, neither fully male nor fully female. Like Ema Saikō, another Tokugawa era female intellectual,[257] Reijo found herself generally distanced from other women and thus suspicious of their intellectual capacity.[258] Furthermore, while it is easy to paint Reijo, a highly educated woman writing in an era when few women had access to education, as some kind of revolutionary attempting to overthrow the status quo, her writings in *Ayashi no yogatari* at least attest to someone far more at ease in the current system than might otherwise be guessed. Although her works do not mesh completely with those of her contemporaries, particularly given the masculine genres in which she wrote, nevertheless they do not represent a radical shift from the norm. Reijo wrote not outside of society, but within the system; she did not require special allowances, but was able to excel in her society as it was.

As Reijo's treatment of her male main characters – sometimes derisive but almost always fond – who are often educated but lacking in social grades and position seems to reflect her views of herself and her status among the educated literati, so too does her treatment of her supernatural heroines reflect, however unconsciously, her position in society. While Reijo was apparently accepted in her small-scale community, like supernatural women her existence as an educated woman was not embraced by Tokugawa society as a whole. The girl with the flying-head provides an apt metaphor for Reijo's existence – a separation of the intellect (head) and physicality (body). Like the girl in her story, Reijo can only exist when put together as one – a woman in truth but one

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[257] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 125.

[258] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 159.

who's head "flies away" to explore the ancient, foreign, and strange – but her society often viewed her or forced her to live as only one or the other, all masculine intellect or all feminine physicality and emotion. A similar image occurs in another tale from *Ayashi no yogatari*, "Fireflies above the Stream," when a woman, kept apart from her lover on her father's command, splits into two people to be able to simultaneously obey her father and marry the man she loves. In the end, the two half-women are reunited as one, the woman's condition described as "the soul departing from the body."[259] As an educated woman and female Sinophile, Reijo broke cultural norms, but did not threaten her community. Like her supernatural heroines, she was not seeking to overthrow society, but merely to exist, neither punished nor redeemed.

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[259] Selden, "Fireflies above the Stream," 261.

**CONCLUSION**


Reijo must have been aware of her blessings as an artist. Not only was she granted

access to the kind of education that most women in the Tokugawa era were precluded

from, but she seems to have been surrounded by men – her brothers, her adoptive father,

her husband, her various teachers – interested in encouraging her intellectual

development. As discussed in chapter 5, however, in many ways such an education left

Reijo in an awkward "between-gender" position. Sakaki claims that "the unresolved

ambiguity of Reijo's identity…leads her to speak through her work as though she were

gender neutral." Reijo was "culturally masculine" through her education and often

skeptical of the intellectual acuity of fellow women, whom she was subsequently

distanced from.[260] Laura Nenzi claims that "before being a woman, before being the

member of a family associated with a religious 'center,' Reijo saw herself as a *bunjin* and

organized her geocultural priorities accordingly,"[261] a *bunjin* 文人 being a member of the

literati. Yet, on the other hand, Reijo was still a woman herself, and thus distanced from

men as well. Sakaki uses the metaphor of sliding doors to describe the situation Reijo and

other female intellectuals faced in the Tokugawa period. She suggests that, on the one

hand, it is impossible to deny the existence of gender-based social restrictions in

Tokugawa Japan, but on the other, said restrictions were often in flux, changing

according to various factors, sometimes allowing women access to areas that had

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[260] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 159.

[261] Nenzi, *Excursions*, 107.

previously been forbidden to them and sometimes disallowing them from once acceptable areas.[262]

It is arguable that Reijo would be worthy of study even if she lacked skill and her work was of lesser quality than her male counterparts for three main reasons: Firstly, she wrote in traditionally "masculine" genres. Secondly, the sheer amount of her literary output is astonishing. Finally, not only did she write in a time period in which women often did not write, but even more importantly she wrote in a time period which is so often presented as completely bereft of female writers. However, Reijo's texts earn their reputation even aside from these three points, well displaying her educated used of language and literary allusion – she was well-educated and well-versed in the tradition that she wrote within, and thus ineptitude is not a reason that can be cited for the lack of scholarship on her. While Reijo was hardly a revolutionary, her work does present an point of view underrepresented in Tokugawa literature, and her treatment of women in particular is worthy of further consideration.

As established in chapter one, societal norms for femininity in Tokugawa Japan were flexible, especially in lower classes, with actual practice not always matching with ideology, but on the other hand rarely directly opposing it. Thus women Sinophiles were alternately welcomed into literary circles for their rarity or shunned for their crossing of societal boundaries,[263] sometimes praised perhaps more than they deserved for their ability in methods of thinking and logic considered opaque to women, or "perceived as

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[262] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 105.

[263] Ibid, 142.

contrived and out of place and thus deserving to be silenced."[264] Female authors,

particularly those not writing in feminine genres, thus received varying treatment in the

Tokugawa period. Just as it is impossible to draw one picture of life for the peasant

woman in preindustrial Japan, so too would it be impossible to blame modern academia's

perception of Reijo completely on Tokugawa era sexism. Much of the bias that has

resulted in the erasure of artists like Reijo from literary history seems to have resulted

from post-Tokugawa literary studies:

> "Tokugawa women of Chinese letters were not deemed 'feminine,'
> 'natural,' or 'native' enough in light of the values projected by the
> normative study of Japanese literature in the late nineteenth and early
> twentieth centuries. Although men's exposure to Chinese learning might
> have been negatively construed by *kokugaku-kokubungaku* standards,
> male Sinophilia was perceived more authentic than the female version: in
> the modern view, it was 'masculine' to write not in one's own voice but in
> a 'foreign' language, so to was more 'natural' for male writers than for
> female writers. Female Sinophilia presents a radical challenge to the
> modern concept of Japanese literature. Thus women Sinophile writers of
> the Tokugawa have stayed in the shadow of Heian and medieval women
> memoirists, who were viewed as embodying the national identity of
> Japan."[265]

Furthermore, as again mentioned in chapter one, while Reijo wrote in a plethora

of genres, one she did not try her hand at was the traditionally feminine *nikki*, preferring

to write about the strange, ancient, or foreign, rather than the self. Reijo's literature is

"one of othering" and as such flouts traditional views of "the feminine,"[266] and perhaps

not coincidentally, despite that fact that she was a well-educated and highly prolific

female writer in a time period seemingly bereft of women writing, Reijo has largely been

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[264] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 104.

[265] Ibid, 104-105.

[266] Sakaki, "Taming of the Strange," 152.

excluded from the literary canon. As stated, given Reijo's circle of supportive masculine figures, the fault seems to lie more at the feet of later scholars' attempts to impose a preconceived trajectory onto Japanese literary history – the idea that female writers are confined to the Heian period, while the Tokugawa period is characterized by male writers – rather than the sexism of the Tokugawa period, though that is not to lay the fault completely at the feet of one or the other. As discussed in chapter two, Norinaga's debate with Reijo over the Sinitic influence in her works does not seem to be based in a complaint over her gender but rather is consistent with his debates with other male Sinophiles. Reijo's plots are complicated, with a multiplicity of characters, and thus require detailed authorial control, in direct contrast to the natural outpouring of emotion that the *kokugakusha* valued.[267] However, even if Norinaga's debate with Reijo was not due to her gender, his theories laid a foundation for later views of "proper" literature in Japan, a view which discounted Reijo from the beginning:

> "When 'how women are supposed to write' is equated with 'how the Japanese are supposed to write,' there is no place for women historians or women Sinophiles…Women with four-dimensional vision, discussing chronology and causality in events and actions, are either reduced to representing the embodiment of momentary beauty, as Murasaki was (in the guise of being elevated to an idol), or erased from literary history, as Reijo was."[268]

Tomiko Yoda examines the changing perspectives on Heian literature by the Tokugawa *kokugakusha* and the Meiji period *kokubungakusha* 国文学者 (scholars of Japanese national literature) in her book *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity*. Norinaga's views on gender in literature,

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[267] Sakaki, *Obsessions*, 120.

[268] Ibid, 120-121.

particularly "femininity," examined in chapter two had far reaching effects in Japanese literary criticism, views which were both challenged and upheld in the Meiji period. The Meiji period saw both an increase in texts considered part of the Japanese canon and the increased import of literary studies which became, in essence, the study of Japan. Nationalism formed the foundation for *kokubungaku* studies, as the study of literature was articulated as the study of the nation, the historical entity encompassing the temporal trajectory of the Japanese people.[269] The Heian period was held up, as it long had been, as the acme of art in the classical period, and the Tokugawa was esteemed as the second peak of Japanese literature for its inclusion of commoner-styles of art, while the medieval period was seen only as the valley between these two climaxes. As Yoda observes, "the pat teleological and organistic trajectory of the birth, death, and resurrection implied by this trichotomy…posited Japanese literature's path to its full realization in the present and future."[270]

According to Yoda, this emphasis on "linear temporality" is one of the more important breaks between *kokugaku* and *kokubungaku* theory.[271] As Japanese literature was increasingly compared against Western literature, the traditional rivalry with Chinese forms of art was forgotten, and Western terms and forms of criticism adopted in its place. The bounds of what was considered literature were loosened and more art forms were adopted as Meiji literary scholars sought after "the national expressed through literary

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[269] Yoda, *Gender and National Literature*, 44-45.

[270] Ibid, 45.

[271] Ibid, 46.

history."[272] Yoda quotes Haga Yaichi, an important *kokubungaku* scholar, as follows: "National literature naturally expresses national temperament, thoughts, and sentiments…Political history only studies the external matters. To learn about the true inner life of the nation – how people lived and in what circumstances they were in – literary history is the best source."[273]

It is a later scholar, Fujioka Sakutarō 藤岡作太郎 (1870-1910), however, that Yoda credits with the equation of the Heian with the feminine and the Tokugawa with the masculine. Fujioka claims that "in all aspects of society, the Edo period was masculine while the Heian period was feminine. One prioritized principles and reason while the other valued affect and taste."[274] The ancient past of Japan, seen in the *Man'yōshū*, is designated as masculine, and was eventually supplanted by the feminine Heian; the warring medieval period, in turn, culminated in the masculine Tokugawa. The return to the masculine showcases the masculine as the underpinning of the Japanese national character, with the feminine only "a passive medium linking the prehistoric masculinity of the native and the transcendent masculinity of the nation."[275] Yoda further argues that in Fujioka's view, feminine aestheticism is "the complementary Other to the masculine principles that allegedly drive history."[276] A final quote from Yoda well summarizes the effects of Meiji academia on the views of Japanese literature and the canon: "Meiji

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[272] Ibid, 50.

[273] Ibid, 51.

[274] Ibid, 68.

[275] Ibid, 70.

[276] Ibid, 71.

*kokubungaku* nationalized the literary discourses of the past by grafting them onto the narrative of national history."[277]

In the end, Reijo's exclusion from modern academia seems to be a result of a combination of contemporary sexism and later historical revisionism, as scholars erased inconvenient authors who did not fit the "flow" of Japanese literary history that they wished to portray. For example, Akinari, too, wrote complicated, plot-heavy, Chinese-inspired texts and also was known to have disputed with Norinaga over literary issues,[278] but rather than being excluded from the canon, he is elevated within it. Joan Ericson examines the issue of Japanese "women writers" in her book, *Be a Woman*, noting that female authors dominated in early literary history, an unusual fact in and of itself, but were soon silenced, and only truly reemerged in the modern era to then face new challenges.[279] The persistent usage of the term *joryū sakka* 女流作家 (woman writer) in discussing female authors inherently suggests some abnormality, for male authors are not explicitly labeled as "men," but simply "authors." Thus singling out a woman who writes as a *female* author indicates that as a woman, said author is already different from the "normal" male author. Japanese literature has long been described using gender-specific meta-language, but as Ericson points out, it is difficult to adequately explain the effects of such language as the terminology's usage is full of "ambiguities and inconsistencies."[280] For example, although sometimes the term *joryū sakka* is used to invoke a certain style or

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[277] Ibid, 72.

[278] Burns, *Before the Nation*, 10.

[279] Ericson, *Be a Woman*, 3.

[280] Ibid.

assumptions about the author of a text, other times critics avow the neutrality of the term. Regardless of the intent behind the usage of *joryū sakka*, the effect has often been a marginalization of female authors, good or bad.[281]

The implicit segregation of female authors in literary studies has been criticized several times from the twentieth century on, especially in the present era. However, there is often little unanimity in discussing terms like *joryū sakka*. On the one hand, there exists an implicit condescension in the term. Truly great female authors were often exclaimed over as writing like men, their works "surprisingly complex (considering the author was a woman)" or "so incisive it makes one doubt the work was written by a woman."[282] Some women themselves, after receiving such praise, expressed pleasure at notably not being labeled as a woman writer. On the other hand, intellectuals calling for equality between the sexes have admitted the benefit that women-only literary prizes or segregated bookshelves have had on the careers of some female authors.[283]

Furthermore, even after the term *joryū sakka* fell into disrepute as no longer indicating a specific style, both sides have alternately claimed a uniqueness to the female perspective, shared among all women and evident in the writing of female authors. In seeking to allow long-ignored female authors the recognition they deserve, some groups have conducted women-specific literary studies, the effect of which is often to imply a similarity between authors where none exists and further solidify the separation of women from men authors as "different." Thus feminist groups seeking to remove

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[281] Ibid.

[282] Ibid, 21.

[283] Ibid, 4.

distinctions between the sexes and traditional biases women have faced might fall into the very transgression they decried in their opponent: defining a minority author only by her minority status. In her biography of Reijo, Yosano Akiko compares Reijo to Murasaki Shikibu, but then immediately, seemingly unconsciously, points out the exact problem with the comparison: Reijo and Shikibu wrote in distinctly different genres, and it is thus unfair to measure Reijo against Shikibu in terms of each author's poetic description of human emotion as it would be to measure Shikibu against Shakespeare as a playwright. Yosano makes up for this comparison by setting Reijo against Bakin, a more apt evaluation as these two authors' styles overlap significantly more. It seems likely that the only reason Reijo and Shikibu are pitted against each other is their gender, rather than the content of their works, highlighting the kind of thinking that, even with the best intentions, might further deepen the gender divide in literature rather than bridge it.

The relative dearth of readily available information pertaining to Reijo presented a difficult hurdle for conducting this study. Thus, in this paper I endeavored to consider Reijo from multiple angles as an attempt to compensate for my missing knowledge and to craft a multifaceted and nuance picture of the author, her world, and her work. Even considering the contested image of women's lives in Tokugawa Japan, Reijo's life stands out as at once breaking and adhering to traditional ideals of Japanese womanhood: she was highly educated and spent most of her life travelling and writing, but was married and even adopted a child in later life. Furthermore, *Ayashi no yogatari*, one of Reijo's more well-known texts, stands as a prime example of literature of the age, playing into the fad of *kaidan* popularity. However, at the same time, Reijo's text is littered with allusions to previous Japanese masterpieces, a complement to Akinari's *Ugetsu*

*monogatari*, highlighting Reijo's education and skill as an author. Moreover, *Ayashi no yogatari* is clearly influenced thematically, as many *kaidan* are, by medieval *setsuwa*, an important starting point when considering Reijo's unique treatment of women and female metamorphosis. By focusing on both Reijo's physical reality, as in chapters one and two, and her place within the literary tradition of Japan, as in chapters three through five, I hoped to craft an argument for Reijo's inclusion in modern literary studies and perhaps help to open the doors for future studies of Reijo.

My own research has barely scratched the surface of what remains to be studied about Reijo, not least of which is the translation of her works from classical Japanese. For example, although the entirety of *Ayashi no yogatari* was not considered within this paper, it is a subject that demands further study. As discussed in chapter four, collections of tales such as *Ugetsu monogatari* and *Ayashi no yogatari* are generally carefully arranged to fit important aesthetic structures in the Japanese tradition, similar to a series of *noh* plays for example. Reijo's work is quite large for a collection of tales, having almost three times as many entries as Akinari's, but without an analysis of the complete text, it is impossible to guess at their organization. Moreover, given the plethora of literary references, *Ayashi no yogatari* begs for an annotated translation. This collection presents an easy access point for future studies of Reijo, because the parceled nature of the text presents less translation challenges than her longer historical novels such as *Ike no mokuzu* or *Tsuki no yukue* 月の行方 (The Whereabouts of the Moon), and furthermore because of the importance of *kaidan* during the period in which Reijo's text was written.

Another important question to ponder when considering Reijo is her lack of publication, the motivations behind it, and the affects her text being only in manuscript

form has had on her later reputation. Few women authors were published during the Tokugawa period, but was that because few women were writing or because publishing was closed to women, or for further unknown reasons? Furthermore, as discussed in chapter two, an analysis of the extant holdings of Reijo's body of works and their history – primarily who preserved these manuscripts – requires further analysis. Part of such an undertaking might include a prosopographical study on Reijo to establish her network of acquaintances, such as that done by Anna Beerens in her essay "In the Shadow of Men: Looking for Literate Women in Biography and Prosopography."[284] A detailed English language biography as well as transcription and translation of Reijo's own autobiography would of course aid future studies of Reijo; however, an even more important change would be Reijo's inclusion in surveys of Tokugawa period literature. While in-depth studies of Reijo are easy to call for, her mere inclusion in the popular imagination of Tokugawa literature would be an important step forward towards allowing Reijo the recognition she deserves.

Reijo doubtless faced sexism during her lifetime and doubtless faced it again after her death. It is nonetheless difficult, however, to answer the question of why she has not yet received proper recognition in modern academia, for seeking to simplistically assign blame runs the risk of reducing complicated issues down to mere stereotypes and further consigning Reijo to obscurity by obfuscating the true reasons she rests there in the first place. One can only hope that, as time passes, light is shed upon an author well-deserving of her place in literary history. In the end, Reijo's merits as an author qualify her for

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[284] Kornicki, *The Female as Subject*, 109-122.

study and recognition, regardless of her gender. Her place as an educated woman in the Tokugawa period only heightens her status.

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