

【2010 年度日本語 ジェンダー学会研究例会（エジンバラ大学） 基調講演要旨】

Women from The Tale of Genji (Excerpt of Speech 講演抜粋)

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Hello, everyone. My name is Mizue Sasaki from Musashino University. Have you ever read *Genji Monogatari*, ‘The Tale of Genji’? Many Japanese people have probably studied a small part of ‘The Tale of Genji’ in their Japanese language classes when they were in junior or senior high school. However, with a length comprising fifty-four chapters and with well over four hundred characters appearing in the work, ‘The Tale of Genji’ has probably presented quite a challenge to a great number of people.

‘Is it a woman’s lot in life merely to wait?’

Herein lies a depiction of the lives of female members of the aristocracy from the *Heian* Period of a thousand years ago.

Chapters one to thirty-three, the first part of *Genji Monogatari*, are an account of the glorious age from the time of Hikaru Genji’s birth to his ascendancy to the position of Emperor. The second part of the work, from the thirty-third to the forty-first chapter, covers a difficult period for Hikaru Genji, from middle to old age, when he is beset with problems. And finally, the third part treats the forty-second to fifty-fourth chapters, which relates the events after Hikaru Genji’s death. The story which unfolds in the ten chapters after Chapter forty-five is set in Uji and this section is referred to as *Uji Jūjō* or the ‘Ten Uji Chapters’.

In this presentation, I would like to take up the first twelve chapters of the first part of the work, covering a time which is recognized as the period of Hikaru Genji’s greatest splendor. I would like to introduce you to the female characters who appear in ‘The Tale of Genji’ up until the heart-broken Hikaru Genji travels to Suma at the age of twenty-six.

The fifty-four chapters of ‘The Tale of Genji’ begin with *Kiritsubo*. Within the *Genji Monogatari*, there are some chapters which have been lost over the centuries and others which have been added later, and consequently, opinion in academic circles, relating to the work, is divided.

Now then, let us begin our treatment of *Kiritsubo*. I will present the original text to you by interpreting it through a modern Japanese rendering.

いづれの御時にか、
女御、更衣あまたさぶらひたまひけるなかに、
いとやむごとなき際にはあらぬが、
すぐれて時めきたまふありけり。

In marriages of the time, it was common for husband and wife to live apart after marrying, with the husband returning to be with his wife at night, this style of relationship being referred to as *kayoikon* or ‘night-visitation marriage’. The woman would simply wait passively for the husband and when the visitations ceased, the marriage would be naturally annulled.

There are numerous instances of women ‘renouncing the world’ in ‘The Tale of Genji’. At that time, it was considered that a woman must have deeply sinned, merely for having been born a woman. Through ‘becoming a nun’, it was thought that devotion to Buddhist training, might work towards expiating one’s sins, in a desire to attain salvation in the afterlife. Many women of the time apparently chose to ‘renounce the world’ because their husbands had died before them.

Here you find the writer, Murasaki Shikibu, writing about women of middle birth! When she began to write ‘The Tale of Genji’, it was thought that readers of the work were also women of the middle classes, not unlike Murasaki Shikibu herself. For these women, ‘The Tale of Genji’ was not simply an imaginary fairy tale, but could be said to be a mixture of fact and fiction—a tale to which they felt they could relate.

Weddings of the day were generally regarded as being a way of ‘adopting a husband for one’s daughter’.

Firstly, the man would visit the woman for three days and then, the wedding celebrations would be held on the third night at the woman’s parents’ home. After the marriage had taken place, the woman would remain in the parents’ home, with the man visiting her there.

Women of nobility in the Heian Period were unable to choose a prospective marriage partner.

Hikaru Genji, despite having a long history of love affairs, one after the other, found in Murasaki no Ue a wife for life. Always waiting at his side, Murasaki no Ue became a trusted confidante and is depicted as an ideal woman, able to express her own opinion. However, we should remember that she bemoaned her bitter lot, in that ‘a woman is unable to freely express what she really wants to say.’ Furthermore, Murasaki no Ue later desired to become a nun but Genji refused to allow this wish to be fulfilled.

The only female character in ‘The Tale of Genji’, with its succession of beautiful women, described as ‘an ugly woman’ is Suetsumuhana (‘The Safflower’). Princess Suetsumuhana, left

behind after her father, the Hitachi Prince, had passed away, was leading a wretched life, bereft of guardianship. The princesses of this period of history had no means of living independently if they were without a father or husband to protect them.

Hikaru Genji secretly meets with Suetsumuhana, however, no matter what he says to her, he can hardly elicit a response and so, growing impatient with the princess, and thinking that he might at least capture a glimpse of her beautiful looks, one snowy morning, he manages to set eyes on the princess. However, the princess, with a long red drooping nose, is prodigiously ugly. The princess's name Suetsumuhana (Benibana) ('The Safflower') derives from her red nose.

Genji no Kimi is reluctant to look at the princess but he decides to act as guardian for this woman with whom he has pledged commitment.

This scene reveals Hikaru Genji's compassionate side and has struck a chord with countless readers for, in the end, Genji takes Suetsumuhana into his residence and looks after her.

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For the times, Hikaru Genji's fortune would have been quite considerable.

Firstly, if you were to convert his salary to a modern-day equivalent, it would be in the vicinity of that of a minister, approximately 400 million yen. At the time of his departure for Suma, no longer receiving his salary, Genji entrusts his whole estate, pasturage, the title deeds of his property, storehouses and riches entirely to Murasaki no Ue.

This is as much as I would like to cover in this presentation. I have examined the story of Hikaru Genji—from his first appearance until the time of his exile in Suma after he has been divested of his official rank at the age of 26. What do you think of the early part of Genji's life? And what of Hikaru Genji and his various relationships with women?

What I have presented to you in this DVD presentation is but a part of the work 'The Tale of Genji'. Please, take the time some day to find a copy of the tale and read it for yourself.

It is my hope that this presentation will have been able to arouse within you some interest in 'The Tale of Genji'.

Thank you so much for your patience.

(Mizue Sasaki, Professor, Musashino University Graduate School)

付録 1 : 講演ポスター



Japanese Studies
SCHOOL of LITERATURES, LANGUAGES and CULTURES

Japanese Studies, in association with Scotland Loves Anime and The Society for Gender Studies in Japanese, is delighted to present talks by

Professor Mizue Sasaki and Mr Jonathan Clements

From Genji to Manga: 1000 years of Japanese women

2.00pm-5.00pm, Wednesday, 13th October 2010
F.21 (first floor), 7 George Square (Psychology Building)

Rediscovering and Recreating Gendered Words in Japanese by Professor Mizue Sasaki (Musashino University, president of The Society for Gender Studies in Japanese)



as well as from Japanese language textbooks for students studying Japanese.

Professor Mizue Sasaki, Japanese language education and teacher training specialist, has examined newspapers, popular magazines, Japanese educational textbooks, fiction, ranging in genre from classical to modern, national to international, compiling them into her created "Dictionary of Gender in Japanese." She will present some examples from the dictionary

FIVE GIRLS NAMED MOE: The Anime Erotic by Jonathan Clements



Jonathan Clements examines the history and development of erotic animation in Japan: business practises, technology, censorship and market forces. How can we criticise the Japanese for the "perversion" of their media, when much of the industry is now driven by American demand?

The Tale of Genji on DVD by Professor Mizue Sasaki

She has recently completed her educational work on the "Tale of Genji", which is particularly aimed at educators and learners of Japanese language within Japanese Studies.

She will show you three selected clips from this DVD (with English subtitles) with her illustrating talk on each screening. We particularly selected relevant chapters for our Japanese 4 option course (Classical Japanese Fiction 4) with a recommendation from the course organizer.



This event is free and open to the public. All welcome!

Enquiries: Dr Yoko Sturt ysturt@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

付録 2 : *The Tale of Genji* on DVD by Mizue Sasaki

源氏物語（DVD）の頒布



初めて源氏物語に接する外国人学習者のために、分かりやすい日本語と英語字幕付、美しいイラスト・音楽と共にお届けする「源氏物語」はオリジナル作品です。

1 「源氏物語の背景にあるもの」 27 分

・ 解説 山折哲雄（国際日本文化研究センター名誉教授）

2 「源氏物語に登場する女性たち」 75 分（英語字幕付）

・ 解説 佐々木瑞枝（武蔵野大学・大学院教授）

監修 佐藤勢紀子（東北大学教授）

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空蝉 6 分

夕顔 7 分

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須磨 6 分

ダイジェスト版 16 分

3 紫式部日記を読み解く 40 分（英語字幕付）

・ 解説 佐々木瑞枝（武蔵野大学・大学院教授）

監修 佐藤勢紀子（東北大学教授）

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イラスト 田中奈々緒

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撮影 スタジオ玄

企画・制作 日本語ジェンダー学会

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