

Sagoromo, Co-Winner 2014 Kyoko Selden Memorial Translation Prize

Translation by David Pearsall Dutcher

Introduction by Brett de Bary¹



Yashima Gakutei, from the series *Ten Courtly Tales for the Honcho Circle*, c. 1820

The inaugural 2014 Kyoko Selden Memorial Translation Prize was shared by Hiroaki and Nancy Sato for [So Happy to See Cherry Blossoms](#) and David Pearsall Dutcher for *Sagoromo*, his translation of the entirety of the eleventh century Japanese court fiction, *Sagoromo Monogatari*. *The Asia-Pacific Journal* is pleased to make excerpts from this second prize-winning translation available to its readers. We do so not only in view of the translation’s vivid and fluent rendering into

English of the rather archaic classical language of the text, but because of its scholarly significance. Little known and read today except by specialists, *Sagoromo Monogatari*, a work written in close proximity to the *Tale of Genji*, and in some ways modeled after it, was for centuries one of the most widely read texts in its genre, as made evident by the fact that over one hundred hand-written variants survive today.

Sagoromo Monogatari consists of four books linked around the figure of a high-ranking prince, the grandson of an Emperor in what appear to be late Heian times. This main character is referred to mainly by his sobriquet “Sagoromo” or “garment,” because of the phrase “garment dyed by love” that appeared in a poem he had written promising undying love for a Princess Genji, another central figure in the narrative. Although Princess Genji remains Sagoromo’s greatest and most enduring love throughout the tale, his passion remains unfulfilled. The complex structure of kinship affiliations in the Heian court can be seen at the crux of this narrative. In the palace where Sagoromo’s father, Lord Horikawa, lives with his three wives, his son Sagoromo and Princess Genji have been raised as brother and sister. Both learn only in adolescence that she is an adopted cousin whose parents have died. While Sagoromo confesses the love he has cherished for Princess Genji, the concept of sexual relations with a “brother” remains unthinkable to her.

The four books of the tale chronicle Sagoromo's affairs with other women in his life, while also registering the despair and melancholy of these two central characters whose relationship will remain unconsummated. A significant structuring feature propelling action in the narrative is that Sagoromo, as a brother, has access to living space Princess Genji inhabits, although as a cousin she would have been required, by the mores of the time, to remain distant and veiled in his presence. (Marriage between cousins was, nevertheless, acceptable.)¹ By the end of the story, Princess Genji has taken vows as a nun, and a sadly pensive Sagoromo once again considers leaving the world to become a Buddhist priest.

An excerpt from the first book, which introduces the relationship between Sagoromo and Princess Genji, while also depicting his involvement with a young woman known to him as "Asukai," follows. The original text is attributed to Senji, a court lady in the service of Imperial Princess Baishi (1039-1096). We are pleased to feature a brief sketch of the translator, David Dutcher, by Edwin Cranston of Harvard University, following the excerpt.

About the Translator

David Pearsall Dutcher was born in 1944, in Rochester, New York. The middle of three children, and only son, he felt that he was a disappointment to his strict father, a lawyer who expected him to attend Dartmouth College, as he had done. Instead, after graduating from high school in 1961, David attended Dartmouth only briefly and then dropped out to find his own way. After a two-year period of wandering from one temporary job to another, David enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1963. He served in the signal corps in Vietnam for over a year in 1965-66, "without pointing [a] gun at anyone," according to an account he wrote later. Subsequently he was rotated back to the U.S. and honorably discharged in 1966.

During his period of moving from job to job, David had his first "meeting with Japan." Living on his own in New York City, he read constantly, discovering translations of Japanese fiction, including works by Natsume Sōseki, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, and Abe Kōbō. He recalls that he was particularly drawn to Abe, in works such as *The Woman in the Dunes*, Teshigahara's film version of which he also saw. Still at loose ends after his discharge from the Marines, David decided to devote his life to knowing Japan. He went as a civilian to Okinawa, which he had visited briefly on the way to Vietnam. With very little money and no visible means of support, David survived thanks to the generosity and acceptance he found in his island home, learning Japanese and eventually attending classes at the University of the Ryūkyūs in Naha from 1967 to 1969. His course now set, David left Okinawa and enrolled in the University of Hawaii, where he earned a B.A. in Japanese literature in 1971. There followed years of study at Tōhoku University in Japan, and a Master's degree at Hawaii in 1976, with a thesis on Nagatsuka Takashi's *Tsuchi*.

The next step in David's journey brought him to Harvard University, where he was admitted to the Ph.D. program in East Asian Languages and Civilizations in 1977. It was at Harvard where David began his study of *Sagoromo*, in a seminar conducted by Professor Edwin Cranston, in the spring of 1978. After passing his General Examination in 1980, David completed a translation of the first *maki* (book) of this previously untranslated late 11th-century work, and made of it the heart of an intended doctoral dissertation. David's translation has a stylistic sweetness unusual in the field of academic prose—it is, in fact, quite poetic. By intention it matches the perceived tone of the original and constitutes a major accomplishment in itself. As a dissertation, however, it remained incomplete for many years.

In a repetition of the wanderings of his youth, David, who by now had a young family to provide for, pursued one way or another to put his scholarly prowess to work and earn a living. Moving restlessly, he lived in Cambridge, Tokyo, Osaka, Hawaii (again), the Kunisaki area of Kyushu, and then for several years in Miyazaki. He was employed (as many Harvard graduate students were in the 1970s and '80s) with editorial duties on the *Kōdansha Encyclopedia of Japan*. Throughout his years in Japan he supplemented his income by freelance translation, but one of his most reliable connections was as a lexicographer with the Kenkyūsha company. He was coeditor of Kenkyūsha's *New College Japanese-English Dictionary*, 5th edition (2002), and is listed as a contributor to *The Kenkyūsha Dictionary of English Collocations* (1995).

A new outlet for David's talent as a translator emerged in the 1990s, when he began to translate the poems of Kaneko Misuzu (1903-1930), a young woman who gained a great following during her brief life by writing short poems in the voices of children. A selection of 54 of these poems was published with David's translations in 1999 by the Japanese publishing firm JULA. This book appeared under the title *Something Nice*. It includes a recording of David reading his translations.

During these restless years, which included periods of teaching English at Osaka University and Japanese at the University of Hawaii, David's *Sagoromo* translation remained in manuscript form. After settling in Miyazaki, he began to turn his attention to completing his work on it with eventual publication in mind. Unexpected and very generous support from Dr. Hiroko Ikeda, one of David's professors at the University of Hawaii, eventually enabled him to concentrate on finishing the work as a dissertation, and David came to Harvard to accept his long-awaited Ph.D. in 2006. There was a moment at the degree-granting

ceremony in Sanders Theater when the audience of well-wishers burst into spontaneous applause on seeing David, white-bearded in a line of new Ph.D.s, mount the stage for the official handshake.

Returning to Miyazaki, David secured a teaching appointment at the local Junior College. The satisfactions and responsibilities of his new status lasted only a few years, however, for Japan's compulsory retirement age was soon reached. Long a sufferer from Parkinson's disease, his health also took a turn for the worse. He and his wife Michiyo moved to Kumamoto for better medical attention. The awarding of the Kyoko Selden Prize for translation at Cornell University has provided a very welcome recognition of David's accomplishment, and for the first time his major translation project is being brought before the public.



Sagoromo monogatari

The fifth month passed and the heat grew oppressive. Just as the kingfisher hovers, enamored of the stream, so did Sagoromo's

every thought dwell on her whom no one knew he loved.²

One noonday when the hours stretched long, Sagoromo went to Genji no Miya's wing of the Lord's mansion. Draped in a thin white robe she knelt in profile before him, intent upon something written on bright red paper. Her hair, spilling loosely over her forehead and drawn out behind, was as long as she was tall. The jet gleam of the trimmed ends drew his eyes, and he wondered how long her hair might one day grow—so thick it was, and she so fair and fetching. Through the cloth of her unlined robe, which hid nothing, he could see her beauty, and he thought: So many the ladies there must be who aren't like her at all! And more powerfully than ever before, he felt that no man who appreciated women might avert his eyes from her. But what of a man whose every thought turned on her, one who, shivering in trepidation, lost all sense of reality whenever he saw her? How could such a man endure in silence? Could even Ichi no Miya in *The Tale of Genji* have been quite so beautiful as my Genji no Miya, Sagoromo wondered. After all, Kaoru never did give up his heart to her.³

"It's so hot ... What are you looking at?"

"They're pictures that the Kamo priestess gave me." In the bright light of the sun her face glowed with the freshness of youth, but when his eyes met hers she turned away and disguised her embarrassment by looking again at the pictures. The cast of her eyes, the fall of hair over her brow, her rounded cheeks, all were beautiful beyond words, and to hide his tears, which on occasions such as this threatened to well over, Sagoromo drew the pictures to him and rested his eyes on them.

"Oh, scenes from the stories about Narihira and his loves. They're very gracefully drawn." Yet they disturbed him, for it seemed that he was face to face with a man who felt just as he did; the picture on which his eyes first alighted

aroused feelings he could not keep to himself: "What do you think of this one?" And leaning nearer he said,

"Yes, yes, I know! But,

look at this picture: trace his steps

who passed before us;

Am I, then, the only one

lost on the high road to love?"

No more could he say. And though the tears that now began to trickle from his eyes might alone have aroused dismay, great was her alarm when he took her hands in his and she saw tears coursing down his cheeks with such urgency that his sleeve could not stanch them. His appearance, when having grasped her arms he forthwith fell upon them, astounded and terrified her. Now so close, she seemed more beautiful even than when he had only gazed on her. His heart was nearly bursting, and though he wanted somehow to express the feelings which for long he had concealed, now, the opportunity at hand, from out of the turmoil within not one thought was he able to draw into words.

Having given himself up to a spate of tears, he at last spoke: "Since you were a child my feeling for you has been very special, and through the years it has grown. Even so, you seemed to take little notice. Of course, anyone in my situation would worry about the consequence in lives to come of such a love; but, you must at least accept that, yes, there is one man who, unknown to the world, loves you in just this way!

"How smoulders desire,

banked all these many years

deep inside my heart?
 Ask it of the ceaseless mists
 that smoke from Muro Pond."⁴

His tears were too many for his sleeves to stanch. It all astounded Genji no Miya, and she felt as if she were caught up in a horrible dream.

"What hurts most," continued Sagoromo, "is that you show to me the same cold reserve one displays before strangers. Watch me! You'll see I'll never force myself on you ... though it should kill me. For years I've realized how terribly hurt Mother and Father would be: I know that I can't forever be at your side like this. But still, though you've seen what's in my heart, for as long as I live don't change the way you are with me and hide behind your screens. If you should think: How glad I am he feels this way! And be gentler with me than in years past you have, why then, at the close of my life I'll have that memory of this world. But even if you decide that you want nothing more to do with me, you will never find that the love I've always felt for you has undergone a change. Can you imagine how in my heart I've suffered for you? You must! ... You must!"

How frightening! How miserable he makes me! These were her only thoughts. Someone approached. Sagoromo pretended to be looking at the pictures, then rose and left.

Genji no Miya was so appalled that she could not even move, and she lay down where she had been kneeling. Why is this? thought Dainagon in surprise when she saw her; her other nannies, who had been resting in back of her dais, were surprised as well. But Sagoromo had been with her, and one to another they said as they came to her side, "The heat is too much and she's decided to take a nap."

"Yes, she's just sleeping."

When Genji no Miya, who still appeared quite unwell, had then gone into the interior of the room and lain down, it seems her ladies simply took up her pictures and looked at them together. At length Genji no Miya set about collecting herself, and she thought: This man whose heart scares me, I trusted more than anyone else in the world. Just think, day and night I sat knee to knee with him ...! And it's all because I grew up apart from my own true parents. For the first time in her life she felt the sadness of her lot. She passed the whole day on her back, and her nannies thought: What? Has she not been well? And they sighed. Not a single person knows, thought Genji no Miya, and if he and I are to be together as we always have been, how ashamed I'll feel. Oh, life is such suffering! Today, for the first time, she knew it to be so.

Having disclosed to Genji no Miya his love for her, it now seemed to Sagoromo only the more painful a burden to bear, and his troubled musings increased. Nothing seemed real, nor could he imagine himself long for this world; his musings alone absorbed him. Ah, what can I do? And he sank down and lay on his mat.

A footman came from his father, who commanded that he appear. Sagoromo felt vaguely ill and was depressed as well, but if the Lord should hear of it he would fuss over him and that would be troublesome; and so, clothes in disorder and tie-strings undone, he went to his father. The Lord, however, found his son even more pleasing unkempt than when he was neatly dressed, and, a smile on his lips, he looked long at him. Yes, he thought, even so is he a pleasure to see. "The Consort leaves the Palace tonight, and you will go to accompany her here. The Emperor said to me just the other day, 'You mustn't keep Sagoromo at home so much.'" The Lord then turned to another matter: "Now concerning Genji no Miya, the Crown Prince is quite impatient to have her, and the Emperor as well has on several occasions said, 'I still insist that you send her

immediately to live at the Palace.’ I think, perhaps, when cooler weather sets in The Minister of the Right, on the other hand, is getting impatient about that daughter he treasures so, and he did say that when she’s twelve or thirteen At any rate, I gather that he’s at last going to send her to the Palace this eighth month, and certainly there’s no need to set ourselves up in competition with him. I think maybe in winter, or, if not then, even after the turn of the year. How would that be? It seems the Prince has as much as said he awaits her. And the Emperor himself tells me it’s what he wants. But then, I shouldn’t wish it to seem that we are purposely raising obstacles against the Minister’s daughter. That would be cruel.”

Although he had known that in the end it must be so, yet did these words take Sagoromo’s breath away. Does it show on my face? He wondered. But, to all appearances unmoved—as ever so he seemed—he replied, “Yes, wouldn’t it be a shame to force the man to put off his plans? And, as you like to say, Father, we might best proceed at a leisurely pace. I’ve heard that Gonchūnagon has become a veritable shadow, so closely does he pursue the Minister’s daughter, and that due to apprehension on that count the Minister has need for haste.”

“I agree. As for Genji no Miya, everybody is quite decided, and not even in the fancy of a moment does it seem anyone has thought to approach her. In the meantime she’ll fill out just a little bit more, and I suspect that girl the Minister is hiding away will be no match for such beauty as hers. His daughter will already have taken on airs of the blood royal, don’t you think? She’ll have that distant reserve and that too proud beauty that turns its nose up at all the world. Well can I imagine how it will be. He’s never taken her out from behind her curtains, nor has he allowed anyone but her mother and her nannies to approach her; so, though limitless the care with which he’s raised

her, won’t she end like that only daughter of the princess in *They Learned to Their Regret?*”⁵ And he laughed at his sport.

Sagoromo recalled the girl: Ah yes, how unexpected she was! But in the lamplight that night I wasn’t able to see this flaw in the pearl of her beauty. But Father describes her aptly as having her nose in the air. The glimmer of a smile passed over Sagoromo’s lips, and noting this, the Lord said, “When I was young there wasn’t anywhere I didn’t go, prowling about and peeking into rooms. Many were the women I came to know—and of every sort! But the best are so very rare. Yet it seemed then that it wasn’t those of the noblest houses, rather it was ladies I came upon in some odd place all overgrown with absinthe whose company excited me more—was it the surprise, perhaps, of finding something unlooked for? Yes, we men have the most terrible time in finding women who satisfy our expectations.

“Now the old Emperor was in all things a very indulgent father, yet when it came to women his restrictions and scoldings were so harsh that he’d not readily allow me so much as to leave the Palace grounds; but I was clever at sneaking around him, and no shady corner did I leave unvisited. When I think of it now, he spoke well: my seed would surely have been legion. Now I have these three wives whom I could never leave, and the others have been quite overwhelmed. I found that in the course of time my desire, even for those I thought I wouldn’t forget, simply ceased to move me.” In such fashion did the Lord recount various experiences from his past. He went on: “Yes, it’s wisest and best that in one’s youth one become quickly attached to some fine, well-born woman. You see, when a man is alone, even if by nature he is not so inclined, he’ll be lured out and it will end up playing havoc with all his best intentions.”

Lord Horikawa now spoke to the point: “And so my gratitude to our sovereign is boundless for

the intimation wrapped in that ‘cloak’ he’s deigned to offer you. If you don’t follow it up with some communication—a private one, I should hope—won’t it all go to waste? Choose a day when the stars bode well and send a note through the Princess’s lady Jijū no Naishi hinting at your earnestness. I do think it’s time you did something about it.” Merely to hear these words was for Sagoromo as unpleasant as a warm robe on a hot night.

“Really, Father, I don’t think His Majesty’s conceit conveys as much. Dare I presume to address the Princess privately?” So, she doesn’t please him, thought the lord, struck by the coolness of Sagoromo’s manner. Although disappointed, it seemed best that for a while he not speak to him about it. Remarking his father’s displeasure, Sagoromo quietly rose and left.

Toward strange parts might
 it bend: this roiling smoke from
 sea wrack burnt for salt?

 No! Though harsh wind course the
 bay

 turning waves against the shore.

 So, in his heart, did Sagoromo sing
 his refusal to submit. He went,
 then, to visit his mother.

“Are you suffering from the heat?” she asked. “These days you seem so very thin.” As she anxiously pondered this notion, so completely innocent did she look that her face seemed not his mother’s, but a young girl’s. The Lord, as he himself said, had left no shady corner unvisited, and many were the women he had known. That Father should love her best is only natural, thought Sagoromo as he gazed at her—though indeed his own mother she was.

“Isn’t it only slovens who are made skinny by summer’s heat? But shouldn’t I then look to the cool breeze which from one side blows, and avoid that which from other quarter presses so warmly? Why has everyone begun to tell me what to do? Shall I ask the boatman at the river crossing which side to choose?” and he smiled so charmingly and with such an effusion of feeling that the young ladies who served his mother thought: Oh! How precious! They were deeply moved, and so very dear did they find him. The lady Nakatsukasa said in a small voice to herself, “How painfully true the lady’s words: ‘Just once, if he would have me.’” Sagoromo gave her a sidelong glance and said, “What’s that you say? Your murmured words draw me to hear more.”

“Oh! You’ve heard me.” Her crestfallen looks did not, it seems, displease. But then, as he cast his gaze across the room, he said “Of all things! Father said to me, ‘Write a letter to Her Majesty’s second princess.’ Might anyone but Father be so blind in his affection for his child? How silly! What would people think if they heard? Just those few light-hearted words of His Highness One can imagine how put out Her Majesty would feel if she heard what Father has made of them. And if I, as Father bade me, make hints to her princess, so cruelly used will Her Majesty feel that the shame native to my station will seem all the more abject. In his great astonishment at the sudden events of that night might it not be that His Highness faulted his own self for insisting that I play? Surely, there redounded upon me that evening honor beyond measure, yet if I make bold to speak to his Princess won’t His Majesty now think me impudent? People of indifferent quality shouldn’t indulge in flirtatious behavior with their betters. Rather, they should be content in the love of some more appropriate girl, and beyond that one shaded blade of tender grass seek not to know the heart of any other. If even that is not to be, then through this world of numbered days one should best pass without attachment.” Tears welled in his

eyes, and seeing them his mother paled.

“You mustn’t always dwell on such appalling thoughts. One should speak of nice things. It is, of course, for you to decide; you don’t think that the Lord and I would ever make you do anything that saddens you, do you? If the princess’s mother should say what you think, why, that would be the end of it. But, just the other day I was chatting with Sammi and she said she’d heard some people at the Palace talking about His Majesty’s promise to you, and one of them even said, ‘His Highness thinks so much of him that it would seem terribly odd if Sagoromo did nothing about it.’ I don’t think she heard anything like what you imagine Her Majesty saying.”

Sagoromo left for the palace after the sun went down, but on the way he stopped to look for the house of the lady whose gate was grown over with absinthe. The footman who had remarked the place said, “There! There! The following day when I came to see, all the shutters were down. So I asked next door and they said the house belongs to the governor of Nagato who’s now down in Tsukushi. The man’s wife has a sister who, it turns out, is one of Princess Nakatsukasa’s nannies. She sometimes comes here when she has to leave service for a while because of Earth God observances and days of ill-omened directions.” She must be the daughter of that nanny who serves Prince Nakatsukasa’s son Shōshō, thought Sagoromo, the girl who was Gondainagon’s choice to do the Gosechi dance at the palace. Considering her lot in life I thought her really quite pretty. Was it she, then, who wrote the poem? A girl who didn’t know me wouldn’t send one, would she?

...



Since speaking to Genji no Miya the poem about Muro Pond, Sagoromo found that now she always kept her eyes lowered when he was with her, and it pained and saddened him. What will I ever do? he wondered, and his sighs grew in number. His heart’s desire now disappointed, he thought: I suppose it will still bring some measure of ease; and he spent his passion in clandestine roving. But how might he have come upon one the softness of whose arms in his hands might rival that of Genji no Miya’s? And his heart was as desolate as that mountain where old women are sent to die.

Although in the matter of birth she fell below Genji no Miya, yet did people think Sen’yōden to be an exceptional beauty. The Crown Prince had bound her fast to him, and so was it that Sagoromo, thinking to console himself for her inaccessibility, now went to the Prince’s Palace. “‘Like sea-grass on the strand beneath the tide at the flood’ how rarely I see you, and how unhappy it makes me,” said the Prince bitterly.

“I’ve been feeling worse than ever I have,” replied Sagoromo. “And since the hot season’s set in I’ve shamefully neglected my duties at court.”

“Why is it you always seem to be ill? Ah, yes, now I know! Don’t be loath to speak. You can tell me!” the prince said, and he drew affectionately near.

“Come now! How can I be worrying about

women when I'm not well? Look at this. I'm so thin I'm about to die!" he said, and thrust out his arm. But so fair and lovely was his skin that the Prince—had he never seen such? Even a woman's—said, "What a treasure! How nicely it would do to pillow me, I should think," and he lay upon it.

"Stop it now! And it's so hot!" Pretty was his vexation as Sagoromo tugged his arm from beneath the Prince.

"As the years go by you appear only the more disheartened," said the Prince, "and I just can't understand it. Why do you seem so? Even the divine Moon Princess herself would never leave you, if it were not your wish. Does your situation mirror Nakazumi's, then? People say it's so. I suppose that's why the Lord frets as he does, and seems so cool to my wishes." So! Will people now even ask me about it? thought Sagoromo. It pained him, and, his mood grown cool, he replied, "I have no taste for even the usual kind of lovemaking. Why, then, should I step out on so difficult a road to love as Nakazumi walked." Was it the abrupt manner of this reply that confirmed the Prince's suspicions? For, now certain it was so, he retorted, "Enough! You make me cross. So there is something in it, isn't there?"

"What a cruel thing you say! Is it not your own habit of mind that prompts such thoughts?" Sagoromo laughed; but within:

My heart, my poor heart,
 everything topsy-turvy,
 nothing I can do;
 Even my sleeve is not enough
 to hide these tears I shed.

It was obvious to the Prince why Sagoromo appeared to be lost in thought, and to tease

him he said, "My own habit of mind? It may be so, I suppose. But then, I have no sister who's not my flesh and blood."

Sagoromo went to see Sen'yōden. But, while making his way to her, he thought: How might I expect to have things as I wish tonight? And in an evil humour he left the Prince's palace.

At dusk, near the crossing of Nijō and Ōmiya, Sagoromo's carriage was approached by another of the style customarily used by ladies in service at court. It had in tow an extra bullock, and to all appearances its passenger had come from some distance. Its side window was open a little and it seemed to Sagoromo that he caught a glimpse of a bald head; surely this person had seen him as well. When, in a rush, the carriage then passed in front of his own, Sagoromo thought: That's odd! Have my eyes deceived me?⁶ But something the boy held, who accompanied the carriage, seemed to mark its occupant as a priest. His footmen had seen it, for raising a clamor they chased after the carriage to stop it, and, unable to make off, it was drawn to a halt. A young footman rebuked the boy: "Those cloth panels hanging from your carriage must mean there's a priest of high rank inside. Even so, you should first stop your bullock and let us go by! But no, so rudely do you vie with us that you drive him right on through. Who's in there, anyway?" he gruffly demanded. "It's the carriage of a certain holy man of Niwa Temple. His mother has been to Uzumasa and is now on her way back. He's a headstrong bullock and I can't keep him from breaking into a trot." The boy now began to tremble.

"Is that so? But was it really a nun I saw?" said the footman. When he then raised one of the screens, out came a priest at the run, and covering his face with his robe he fled.

"Now why does this nun run away," the footman said, and they all chased after the man.

“Leave off!” said Sagoromo, who had halted his carriage. His men allowed the priest to run away, but taking hold of the boy they asked, “Who’s that man? Who is he now?”

“He’s an instructor of ceremonial etiquette at Niwa Temple. For years he’s desired a lady who’s been staying these few days at Uzumasa. Her people said she was leaving and borrowed a carriage from him, which it pleased her to board. Then he stole off with only her and left her ladies behind. A priest, no less, forcing himself like this on someone. Buddha hates him for it, and this is how he’s made him suffer. The bullock’s a fierce one; still, I should have stopped him and let you go ahead, but the priest finally had what for a long time he’s wanted and was in a hurry. ‘They’ll think it’s a Court lady’s carriage. Just go as fast as you can!’ he said, and he scolded me. It says in the sutras, ‘Submit to thy master.’ I’ve been with priests for years so I knew that, and I made the bullock trot. But I’ll never, ever let that priest use me again!” The boy said, and he thought: How frightening! Oh, how miserable I am!

The footmen felt sorry for him and let him go. They reported, then, to their lord what they had learned: “These things did the boy tell us. So the fact is there’s a woman in the carriage, and everyone else has run away. Having been tossed aside like that one of course can’t help feeling sorry for her.”

“Why in the world have you done this? In the event you don’t listen to my orders. Where do you suppose she came from? And why have they left her? Ask the boy and take her home,” Sagoromo said and had the carriage drive on. Again a footman came to him. “The boy is gone. No doubt, someone will eventually come to get the carriage. That priest must be hiding around here somewhere, but without bringing torches it’s just too dark to see.” The footman then called out: “Start up the carriage!” But Sagoromo now began to wonder about her: This woman they say is in that carriage, what

do you suppose she’s like? If this all happened against her will, how miserable she must feel! It’s dark and she’ll be wandering in the empty streets. If I continue on and leave her, for certain that priest will come and do with her as he wishes. Sagoromo pitied her, but where should he take her? I might, just for the night, bring her home with me. But then he remembered—for he could not help but do so—how the priest’s legs had looked when he pulled his robe over his head and ran off, and he was amused. Yet, if he were to leave her where she is, how wretched she would be made to feel. But again, when he thought: Mightn’t that man have touched her while they were riding together? She then seemed to him unclean, and he was not attracted to her at all, for if he did take her home to stay with him in the cool shadows of Asukai,⁷ he could not very well make love to her. Still, I wonder what she’s like, he thought, and to satisfy his curiosity he had his carriage turn back.

He climbed into the other carriage and looked. The light was failing, but there she was with her robes pulled over her head. “Ah, poor thing! No matter how grand that man might be, bitter must be your feelings for one who would run off and leave you all alone like this. No such love for you has he that he’d follow you to Yoshino Mountain!⁸ If I go off and leave you, I think something even a little more frightening might happen: when he sees I’ve gone that man who was with you will no doubt come straight back here. So, if the fact is you’ve become involved with him against your will, then tell me where you live. I’ll take you there. Or, if it’s your wish to go back to him, I’ll leave.” She discerned in his voice an air of cultivated grace such as she was not used to hearing, and she wondered: Who is he who speaks like this? She was ashamed that she had no idea, nor did she imagine it possible to reply. Yet it distressed her to think: If I don’t answer when he says these things to me, then he really will leave. If I could just think how to tell him the way. But the only sounds which escaped her lips were

the whimpers that punctuated her tears. And these, he saw, appeared now to flow all the more freely. So helpless and sweet did he find her manner—more so, even, than before he imagined he should—that he too began to feel a little the pain she felt.

“If you wish it, why then I’ll be going, I suppose. Could I but know that it’s not what you want ... Why, for pity at how you suffer ... Now what reason have you to cry? He’s still somewhere near; but I won’t leave you,” Sagoromo said, hoping to draw her out. Yet she, in the grip of her profound misery, could scarcely assemble her thoughts. Moreover, the sight she imagined her home must present to him was a source of shame. Everything was making her feel wretched; and then when she thought: Is that priest still around? She grew even more frightened, and cried and cried.

“It’s at Ōmiya and some other street. Across from a man called Dainagon, I think. I remember there’s a lot of bamboo. A place like that Could you ...?” Her manner as she said this was so sweet and innocent that he could not imagine her to be entirely ordinary; she touched him deeply and his heart now went out to her. He was curious to see how she lived, and together they drove off in her carriage toward that quarter in which he gathered her house must lie.

...



Someone raised a shutter and said, “In here,” and the carriage was drawn up to the house. A

woman of some fifty years, who, in the light of her brightly burning torch, looked not the least becoming, said, “Well! Why is it you’ve not returned till now? Was the carriage late? Taifu no Kimi came for you, did she?” The woman’s appearance in the torchlight was unutterably common and Sagoromo looked away. “They’re saying, ‘A stranger has come!’ and for certain they’ll beat me. Get down from the carriage,” Sagoromo said and raised the girl to her knees. Yet, as the light of the torch was so very bright and she so terribly ashamed and distressed by all that had happened, she could not immediately move. Having pulled her up he saw that over a lavender under-robe she wore a rumpled crimson kimono which was wilted out of shape by the tears she had shed along the way. The fringe of hair that lay upon her brow was quite damp; against the lusterless cloth of her kimono her long tresses shone. Her appearance of feeling deeply her humiliation and helplessness was not what Sagoromo expected from an ordinary person; indeed she was a very sweet and pretty girl. Sagoromo thought: How odd! I never imagined anything like this might happen. If I don’t take her for mine what a loss it would be! But he then thought: Oh, what if that miserable bald pate has fondled her. How distasteful! “In any case,” he said to the girl, “I’m just a stranger who passed you in the roadway, someone for whom you have no feeling and that, I imagine, is how you wish it to remain. Yet, even though you find me not the equal of the priest, don’t cast me from your thoughts! Won’t you be my spindle-wood bow from Adachi and bend to me?”⁹

The girl was ashamed and quickly moved to get down, but he grasped her arm. “You don’t answer me. If my aid to you in the street has pleased you, then you must say, ‘It’s so dark. Don’t go!’ Oh, how unhappy you’ve made me feel.”

In a sad, sweet voice she replied,

“Please, don’t go! Stay with me.”

Oh, I could never say that.
 If Asukai
 you might stop forever, but
 here no cool glade will you find.”

Still did he wonder: Should I do this? Though it was not his custom to sleep with women he had just met, yet did it grieve him to think that it might all end without him seeing the figure beneath.

“At Asukai
 cool glade, your shadow to see,
 I will rest a while.
 In the grass, soon for haying,
 Does that man now lie in wait?”
 he said, and, though fearful of the consequences, added, “While I await my carriage keep me here with you.”

Together they stepped down from the carriage. And yet did she think: Oh, how shabby! No, it won't do at all. But to Sagoromo her sad looks were very pretty.

“Who is this man?” the old woman asked in perplexed agitation, but Sagoromo said nothing. It was conveyed to the woman that Sagoromo's carriage had lagged behind and that he would wait for it. Without delay Sagoromo drew the girl to the veranda of her house. The moon, which was just a day past the full, rose above the hills, and there on the veranda they now saw each other. Sagoromo stroked her hair into place. His appearance, as he sat bathed in moonlight on the narrow veranda, his face so bright that it seemed to

throw off light, again moved the girl to think: What a shabby place to bring him to! Nevertheless, she did not succumb to her shame; rather, she attended him with such warmth of feeling and charm that she seemed to him a marvel of sweet innocence. Certainly the people in the house must have been thinking: What in the world is going on? and raised a commotion with their suspicions. Sagoromo heard someone say, “Shall we bring your carriage in?” But he was not content to leave with so little gained. “Don't you think that priest might come?” he said to distract the girl, and in the end she was his.

She didn't even know who he was, and she thought: Oh! Now what will happen to me? For his part Sagoromo felt that their bond of love was a rare and wonderful thing. He had seen with his own eyes that the filthy priest had not sullied her, and he thought: Is it my fate, then, that has awakened me to her? Surely his feeling for her was not insincere. He had long sought the love of certain high-born ladies, yet now he found that his strongest desire was to rest his head on a humble straw pillow. Night after night without a care for the dews that wet him at dusk and dawn he made his way in secret to her.

The girl—we shall call her Asukai—was the daughter of a middle counselor who had once served as viceroy of Tsukushi. Her parents were both dead, but her nanny—a distant connection who was the wife of a director of the Office of the Budget—had raised her with considerable care. When, after some years, her nanny's husband died, their situation became quite insecure. It was then that her nanny had found it necessary to arrange with the instructor of ceremonial etiquette at Niwa Temple for the future support of her charge. However, the priest possessed appetites inappropriate to his calling; without anyone knowing, he conceived a passion for Asukai and behaved toward her as we have seen.

The bullock boy related to Asukai's people the story of her rescue. "What a startling turn of events!" Nanny exclaimed. "And who is this young man who's done this? Somebody go and see." But while they discussed what to do, Sagoromo had made his way in.

Nanny was stunned when no further communication arrived from the priest and bitter that she should in this way learn the nature of his heart. If he so suddenly turns his back on us, how in the world will we get along, Nanny wondered. Feeling that she was left without recourse she dispatched a messenger, but the priest did not reply, and endless worry over her charge now loomed before her.

To Asukai Nanny said, "Now that our priest has renounced My Lady, to whom can we look to care for her? A difficult chore that ... Oh, dear! And so many high-born ladies, their hopes pinned on Genji no Miya's removal to the palace, have already paid visits at Lord Horikawa's. But none of them has such a pretty face as you! My Lady, you must go, too. Yes, on her own there's little a woman can do. I'll just go off somewhere ... anywhere. Now then, who is this man who seems to be calling on you? Isn't it odd that he's so terribly secretive? Does My Lady know who he is?"

"No, I don't," replied Asukai, "and now that I've fallen so low in the world as never I imagined I would" Tears came to her eyes, and seeing how sad Asukai looked, Nanny too began to cry.

"Why, just last night," Nanny went on, "when he had one of his men knock at the gate and no one was there to answer, the man said, 'How blatantly do you flout My Lord! Now I'll bring the jailor and have him open the gate.' The man's words seem to have led our people to think his master is Kurōdo no Shōshō whose father is director of the Imperial Constabulary. The few servants we have are so frightened they don't come anymore, and aren't we so very, very helpless without them? It's a

wonderful thing to have a suitor of some slight quality, but, the way things stand with him, what good does it do you? I'm an old woman, so I needn't worry about the future. A man has asked me if I will go up north with him and I'm of a mind to do it. But to whom am I to entrust you? At every turn you're my one impediment."

To this Asukai replied, "Wherever it should be, if you go, so will I. If I don't, what would I do? And how could you be at peace with yourself if you left me behind. These unexpected visits—I certainly don't think they'll continue."

Her nanny was, of course, deeply moved by Asukai's distress; nevertheless, there was neither man nor means and she was helpless to think of any. She decided, it seems, that when the General of the Army defending the northern marches came, she would say, "Well enough! I'll go."

As Sagoromo grew accustomed to being with Asukai his affection deepened. It was not a passing fancy, and it seemed certain that he would pledge his love to her forever. Yes, to his mind she was so excellent, so fine in her beauty—though in fact one in her circumstances should not have warranted especial attention—that their union seemed surely a thing fated. Dear to him she was, nor did he make her await him night upon night, but found his chances to come to her unseen. The people who accompanied him remarked on it: "This has never happened before. What a veritable goddess she must be. But her house! It looks so terribly ordinary."

"She is, isn't she, the girl whom that instructor of ceremonial etiquette, was it, at Niwa Temple stole off with?"

"And well he did to steal off with such as her!" Each of the men who had witnessed these events voiced his opinion, and to all the outcome was inexplicable.

Meanwhile Nanny's preparations for her

departure were apparently proceeding apace. “I certainly can’t leave you behind,” she said to Asukai, and began to cry. “But how can I take you with me as long as that man continues to call? And how will you manage if I don’t?”

“I just cannot get along without you Nanny—not even for a little while. I worry, you know, that you won’t always keep me with you. And I’m such a burden when it comes to doing anything at all, but Oh, if you’d only take me, I’d go anywhere.” In her despair Asukai’s words came haltingly.

“Well, in that case you must come with me,” replied Nanny. “But I do think it would be terrible to pry you from this gentleman who feels so deeply for you, just to take you off with me. What to do? I can’t willy-nilly sacrifice everything for you. But what, then, should we do? I might, out of concern for you, decide to stay here. But I will do that—and a great trial it would be—only if we can rely on a certain person of recent acquaintance whose intent has admittedly not been pure. As things stand, what with this gentleman who morning and night can’t take his eyes off you Certainly, in the unlikely case it should ever amount to anything” So did her nanny, with some nicety, describe the alternatives open to her mistress. Nevertheless, Asukai noted, though she was helpless to say so, that never did the woman leave off making arrangements for the journey. Even should Asukai resign herself and think: Such hardships as I suffer are the way of the world! how might she not with all her heart, feel the sadness of it?

It made matters worse that Sagoromo had not clearly told her who he was. Yet what she learned of his heart and of the way he spoke assured her that he was by no means unreliable. Of his nature in general she conceived, as those nights grew in number that were not passed vainly awaiting him, a deep love of which she spoke to no one. How many days, she wondered, have we together until I

go? And as she counted them off she grew discouraged. Yet, still did she hesitate to make hints about how things stood. When her appearance of being somehow disturbed by her thoughts only grew the more noticeable, Sagoromo thought: Is she this way because she doesn’t know who I am and so harrows herself with doubts of my sincerity? and it troubled him. But then, he thought, for the time being I don’t want to let people know about us. “Call yourself Fishergirl and I’ll be your Fisherboy,” he said, proposing a test of wills. The day will come, he thought, confident that his feeling for her was not shallow. He had not yet accustomed himself to promising a woman his love for all time, but still no one was there whom he loved more than her.¹⁰

Summer passed and autumn came. To Sagoromo it seemed that since that day when together they had traced the man’s steps who had passed before them, Genji no Miya was very distant with him, and in his bitterness he thought: I might have expected it! But, so too did he think: If it’s all the same, then I’d give my life to have her. In the eyes of the world nothing had changed, yet Genji no Miya now thought: No matter what, I just don’t want to hear such words again, and she quietly prepared against a recurrence by arranging things so that Sagoromo would have no opportunity to voice that passion which threatened to gush from him like the waters of a stream between two boulders.

When Sagoromo went one day to Genji no Miya’s rooms he found her playing *go* with their mother. “I should have come earlier, then I could have served as judge for your game,” he said, and sat down by them facing Genji no Miya, who was wearing a pale green unlined robe of figured silk. Even her little curtain-stand had been pushed aside, and she felt utterly exposed and ashamed. She left off playing and leaned slightly forward over the board, as she discreetly raised her fan. Her mother had looked up and so she could make

no show of turning her back: There's nothing I can do! The beauty of her face as this thought passed across it moved Sagoromo to think: Though in one night a thousand nights should pass, could the time ever come when I tire of you? He was now appalled that, even should he call it but the folly of a moment, he had lain with Asukai, and on this thought he dwelt.

The fall of hair over her brow ... so close was he to her No, no, he thought, how could she appear so exceptional in my eyes alone? A girl like her, might there ever be another? Can I even go on living if day and night I don't have her to gaze on? If I take a woman who, even in the slightest matter, is inferior to her, what meaning would life hold for me? Oh, if I don't have my way, whatever will keep me alive? The complaints he discovered against his lot aroused his shameful bent for tears, and to distract himself he asked, "Whose turn is it?"

His mother studied him for a moment and then spoke her mind: "Last night they came from the Palace asking after you, but you weren't here and no one knew where you'd gone. You must go to Lady Jijū no Naishi and convey to her some hint of your feeling for her mistress the Princess. Even your father said, 'He's acting like an absolute dolt.'"

Concerning the Princess, Sagoromo had no reply. "So this is the complaint that has made Father seem out of sorts with me," he said. "But what can he expect of someone who never does anything right? Now I know why he thinks of me as a thorn in his side." His eyes grew bright with tears, and the sweetness, then, of his face and manner would have subdued even a wild native of the northern frontier. His mother, need one say, was reduced to tears. "In my heart," she said, "my one thought is to let you do as you wish. But, now what do you suppose will happen?" Her tears raining thick, so well did she compare in beauty to Genji no Miya that one could only say that they were sisters born of the same womb. Sagoromo

thought: No more will I call the Lord, 'Father.' How I envy his lot that he should have such a wife as she. Sagoromo felt, as did the Lord, a great pride in her, and it was limitless in measure: deep were the thoughts which accompanied the gaze he fixed on her.

...

From the stifling gloom of the clump of trees that stood in the garden beyond where the ladies attending them sat chatting, there came the grating cry of a cicada; fraught with the heat of early autumn the sound fanned yet higher the desire that burned in Sagoromo's heart:

"I want to cry too—

out loud, cicada, like you.

My heart, consumed,

is the hollow skin you cast;

do I suffer less than you?"

Thus, in conceit, did he cloak his feelings. "Cicadas shrill among yellowing leaves / Autumn draws in on the palace of Han," Sagoromo gently intoned, and his voice, as if heard by them now for the first time, touched anew the young ladies in attendance; how might each in her heart not think: Never one so beautiful! In such measure did Sagoromo's feelings imbue the very air about him, and so did the ladies, who had turned to look at him, feel their cares vanish before his charm. So gravely did he bear himself, and, with an air of leaving much unsaid, so deeply withdrawn was he that when now and again he was moved to sing, it would be some sad and suggestive tune; none might there be, even among tongue-tied swordsmen, who would not find their heart softened and their pity aroused for Sagoromo. So was it that, when they had grown accustomed to his ways, it should seem that

they too, who need only wait on him as now they did, must have nothing they might further desire. He was not disposed to be intimate with any, yet it was in his nature to banter affectionately, and none of them did he spurn. Some ladies were made jealous by this warmth of feeling, yet in time each would come to think: I just cannot forget him.

The day was now drawing to a close. Sagoromo did not immediately rise to go, but remained to gaze out at Genji no Miya's garden. Everywhere the various flowers had loosed the threads that bound their petals. Sagoromo thought: Are they too unable to stanch with their sleeves the tears of dew that settle on them? The chirring of crickets, gathered where the grass grew in tussocks, rose in raucous confusion, and he imagined himself in the embrace of open fields. Well did he know the vexation that the crickets seemed to feel. The moon rose into the deepening night and made him feel how sweet it would be to see it from beneath the eaves of Asukai's little house. Clear as the moon above, it seems, were his feelings.

He went to her and found that everything was just as he had imagined: the shutters had not yet been lowered and Asukai lay at the edge of the room staring out into the night. It vaguely troubled him that she should appear to be so deep in thought. He spread a sleeve for her, as she for him, and they reaffirmed their love. Yet even then there arose in his mind the image of Genji no Miya as he had seen her today, and he thought: Ah, this heart of mine never will it be satisfied with one of such modest place as Asukai. Could I ever have expected things to turn out like this? If I can't have what I want there's no reason to go on in the world. This girl is just a meaningless entanglement ... Oh, but what am I saying! I can't go on living if I don't see her. She's so sweet and innocent that I could never give her up. He it was who had caused this all to happen, yet only now did he realize how painful it was for him.

"I've passed my life without feeling what other people feel," he said. "Why this happened isn't ours to know, but since first I chanced to hold you in my arms I've felt as never before I have. And now I love you so much that I can't stop seeing you. But how would you feel if I didn't live out my years: 'Token of love once shared is / the pang of desire unspent.'¹¹ Who was it that said that? Well, I know now that I'll gladly give my life just to be with you once more," and with his sleeve he wiped the tears from his cheeks. In the moonlight, now shining bright and clear upon him, Asukai could see his eyes, which yet glistened a little with damp, and she wondered: This face, all the more does it seem like that man's whom I've heard people talk about. And who am I, then, to think he'd take care of someone like me? Before he forgets me, as for certain he will, wouldn't it be best to go off as chance leads, like dew scattered by a goose taking wing? This thought brought tears, and, shamed, she hid her face in the folds of her robe:

"My dear water oat,
 even once, just seeing you
 I'll not forget—but,
 Will the waters cease to spring
 that flood Asaka Marsh?"

Her dispirited voice and manner as she spoke these words did not strike him as possessing any great beauty; nevertheless, she aroused in him a deep warmth of sympathy:

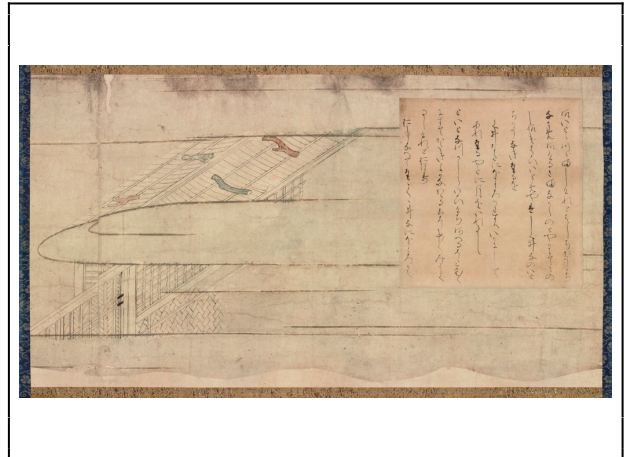
"Let pass year on year!
 You'll find my heart yet willing
 And the feeling deep;
 Just so will rise the spring

To flood Asaka Marsh.

“It seems from your poem that I appear to you to be wavering, but soon enough you’ll see just how true my heart is. It’s not my way, so I know nothing of the hollow promises men make to women. For one reason or another I may give the appearance of feeling differently than in my heart I do, but I think this love for you will not change.”

As they talked together it was only with the greatest difficulty that Asukai kept from him her fears: I could just hint at what’s to happen and see how he takes it, she thought. But the place to which her nanny planned to go was not the least bit pleasant, and it anguished her to think—contrary to her intention in telling him—what he might imagine of the indignities she would suffer during her journey on the road north: Oh, I’ll just go away without telling him a thing! And who knows when, at the barrier on the Hill of Meetings, our waters will again flow together? There’s only the long wait. It’s best, then, that the name of this stream that carries me should never be known to him. Her inclination to follow this course was strong, yet still did she think: For a while, if only in

astonishment at my shallowness of feeling, surely he’ll sometimes remember me. She was no longer able to hold back her tears, and seeing them Sagoromo could only think: I must seem to her capricious and incapable of trust, and now she’s sad. She never had an ordinary life, nor has she a single friend. Nothing of interest happens to her from one day to the next. Isn’t that why she fell into the hands of that priest? And so it’s to be expected that since we met she should find it difficult to trust in me. The pain she felt touched him deeply, and in pledge of his love he spoke these few, spare words: “On the mountain where / the sparrow-hawk moults / the evergreen beech / may drop its leaves / but you I’ll shed for no other.”¹²



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Notes

¹ With thanks for editorial and translation assistance from Lili Selden.

² These important structural features are noted by Donald Keene in *Seeds of the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 523.

³ Editor's note: David Dutcher's submission to the Kyoko Selden Memorial Translation Prize was about forty pages long. This excerpt, about half the length of his submission, centers around protagonist Sagoromo's love for Genji no Miya.

⁴ Nakazumi, a character in *Utsuho monogatari*, seeks the hand of Atemiya who has the same mother as he. *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* (NKBT) 10, p. 229. Kaoru, the putative son of Genji, the eponymous hero of *Genji monogatari*, conceives a passing infatuation with Reizei-in's first princess (or "Ichi no Miya" in the source text), who is his cousin. NKBT 17, p. 228.

⁵ *hikiuta* (a poem alluding to a prior poem)

いかでかは思ひありとも しらすべき室の八島の煙ならでは What am I to do when
 this fire sears my heart, yet, it sends out no mists That smoking from Muro Pond
 would show how I yearn for her

Fujiwara no Motokata 藤原元方 (888 – 953), *Shika wakashū* 詞花和歌集 188

⁶ *They Learned to Their Regret* みずから悔ゆる is the title of a now lost *monogatari* from which there remain only nine waka collected in *Fūyōwakashū* 風葉和歌集 (1271).

⁷ A priest of high rank would still be far beneath Sagoromo. Moreover, there were strict sumptuary regulations detailing the decorative devices a person of each rank was entitled to use on their carriage and the chief rule of the road was always to defer to one's betters.

⁸ "Asukai" 飛鳥井, a place name appearing in a type of popular song known as *saibara* 催馬楽, conveys the randy nature of Sagoromo's curiosity about the woman in the other carriage: 飛鳥井に宿りはすべしや Should I spend a night with her at Asukai? / かげもよし みもひもさむし The shade is deep and the water cool / みまくさもよし Thick too the graze for horses. (Takeda Yūkichi 武田佑吉 ed. *Kagura-uta, Saibara* 神楽歌・催馬楽, p. 111.) Editor's note: Characters in classical Japanese fiction were most often referred to by their titles (e.g., "Genji no Miya" means "the Genji Princess"), a sobriquet derived either from association with an image in a poem (e.g., the character Asukai is nicknamed after the aforementioned reference to Asukai as a place-name), or a nickname evoking, perhaps, a physical trait of that individual (e.g., "Kaoru" in *Genji monogatari* is so-called because of his unique fragrance).

⁹ This is an allusion to poem 1045 in *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集. Fujiwara no Nakahira 藤原の仲平 (875-945) vows to follow his lover, Lady Ise, to far China. No match for doughty Nakahira is the feckless priest.

¹⁰ The allusion invokes an incantatory lubricity. (Adachi Plain was in Mutsu province.)

陸の安達の真弓我が引かば 末さへ寄り来しのびしのびに If I should pull the
 spindle-tree bow of Adachi in Mutsu, quietly, so quietly bend to me always

Kokinwakashū 古今和歌集 1078

¹¹ Here an anonymous waka pun (夫木和歌抄 14884) pivoting on the place name Nashihara 梨原, a post station in Ōmi no Kuni (now Shiga Prefecture), yields the sense "none do I love so much as I do you." Nashihara is an example of *kago* 歌語, a congeries of usages peculiar to waka, and includes the items: *makura kotoba* (e.g., 足引きの[やま]; see note 9A), *uta makura*

(e.g., 蛙鳴く井出; see note 9B), or metonym (*kari ga ne* 雁が音 for *kari* (wild goose). 9A. The phrase “the very flower of spring” appears in the record of a poetry contest (*Shimpen kokka taikan*, vol. 5, p. 101) sponsored by Princess Baishi 祿子内親王 and held a few days after the tenth of the 3rd month of a year not long after 1058 when she stepped down as Kamo priestess; its source is a poem on the theme of “willows and cherries” by Mimasaka 美作, who participated in 21 of the 25 poetry contests sponsored by Baishi in her lifetime and contributed 41 poems.

足引きの山のはよりはいでねども 花こそ春のひかりなりけれ Although it doesn't
 rise over the crest of the foot-clutching hills Still the cherry is truly the very light
 of spring.

The epithet *hana koso haru no* may also have been an encomium to Baishi, who had long been unwell but was now apparently on the mend. (In the opening paragraphs of Book 37 of *Eiga monogatari*, Baishi is described as having “lost her mind” 御心をたがわせ給いて.) The prose introduction to this truncated four-poet, eight-round contest reads, in part: “Saying she (Baishi) wished to see others besides the cherry, she looked out the finest and had them all brought and replanted together.” One can discern echoes of these doings in the opening paragraph of *Sagoromo*, for, though she was not among the participating poets, Senji 宣旨 (a lady-in-waiting of Baishi's to whom authorship of *Sagoromo* is ascribed), would have read the verses and shared the impression the event had on other members of Baishi's retinue. Record of this poem contest appears also in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類従. 9B. Ide 井手, south of the capital, was renowned for its frogs and kerria:

かわづなくるでの山吹ちりにけり 花のさかりにあはましものを The kerria at Ide,
 of the croaking frogs, have shed their blossoms Would that I had come when they
 were at their best

Anonymous *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集150 The phrase かわづなくるで is an example of an *uta makura* 歌枕 which is attached to place names. It is one of a variety of set poetic phrases, or *kago* 歌語, used in *Sagoromo*.

¹² An allusion to the anonymous *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 717:

飽かでこそ思はむ中は離れなめ そをだに後の忘れがたみに Let's part while still we
 yearn for each other Token of love once shared is the pang of desire unspent

¹³ An allusion to the anonymous *Shūiwakashū* 拾遺和歌集 1230, for which a complete translation, in four lines, appears in the text: はし鷹のとかへる山の椎柴の葉がへはすとも君は
かへせじ