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Chigusa Steven

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Hachikazuki

A Muromachi Short Story

by CHIGUSA STEVEN

HACHIKAZUKI,¹ ‘The Bowl Girl’, is a short story of anonymous authorship which was produced some time in the Muromachi period, 1392–1573, but its popularity in modern times resulted from its publication in the early eighteenth century by Shibukawa Seiemon, a bookseller.² *Hachikazuki* was one of twenty-three similar stories which Shibukawa collected and published under the title *Goshūgen Otogi Bunko*,³ ‘The Wedding Companion Library’, although a few of them dated from the early Edo period and were evidently regarded as belonging to the same genre as the rest. Later the collection came to be known simply as *Otogi Zōshi*,⁴ or ‘Companion Stories’, and when in the modern period (after 1867) many other Muromachi short stories were discovered, they too were published under the rubric of *otogi zōshi*. This term therefore conventionally refers to all short stories which were produced in the Muromachi period.

It is not altogether clear why *otogi zōshi* have not been accorded a more prominent place in the history of Japanese literature. One reason is that Shibukawa, who was the first to publish a collection of medieval short stories, greatly prejudiced their readers by implying that they were originally written for women. He specified his intended audience by appending to his collection the words: ‘All the stories and tales from former days were collected and boxed here as a convenient guide on self-improvement for women.’⁵ It is not surprising that in a society as sexist as was Tokugawa Japan, *otogi zōshi* were soon looked upon as children’s stories. The writer Santō Kyōzan referred to them as entertainment for the young,⁶ and they gradually became regarded as fairy tales. Kenkyūsha’s *New Japanese-English Dictionary*, 1954, lists *otogi zōshi* as ‘a book of fairy tales’.⁷

THE AUTHOR is Lecturer in the Department of Asian Languages, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

¹ 鉢かづき

² His full name, including his trade name, was Shibukawa Shōkōdō Kashiwabaraya Seiemon 渋川称觥堂柏原屋清右衛門, and he lived in Osaka. Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次, *Chūsei Shōsetsu*

no Kenkyū 中世小説の研究, Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 5th ed., 1968, p. 17.

³ 御祝言御伽文庫

⁴ 御伽草子

⁵ Ichiko, p. 17.

⁶ 山東京山; Ichiko, p. 19.

⁷ The 1974 edition defines the term: ‘a book of stories for women and children.’

It is clear, however, that the original audience of Muromachi short stories did not consist solely of women and children, and even many stories in Shibukawa's collection were hardly appropriate for such an exclusive audience. Themes such as homosexual love between a priest and young acolytes, brutality, and revenge against thieves, were anything but edifying to women and children. Allusions to texts in Chinese and the use of many difficult Chinese words also suggest men as the intended audience of the Muromachi stories. Modern scholars therefore no longer believe that *otogi zōshi* were written exclusively for women and children.

Nevertheless, critics continue to view them rather negatively as a decline in the development of the Heian fiction tradition,⁸ as 'artless medieval tales',⁹ or as 'an amorphous genre'.¹⁰ *Otogi zōshi* are considered worth reading, not for any literary value they might possess, but for the light they cast on Japanese cultural history.¹¹

To support a call to re-examine the artistic value of the Muromachi short stories requires far more than the enthusiasm of one devotee. Western scholars would at least first want to read some of the better stories in translation as well as to know something about their historical setting and characteristic features. In this article I have chosen to provide a translation of and commentary on one of the more delightful stories, and I rely on the work of others for a brief discussion of the typical features of the genre as a whole. It is in the light of these that the value of *Hachikazuki* must be assessed.

The Otogi Zōshi Genre

ALTHOUGH nearly five hundred *otogi zōshi* dealing with a wide variety of topics have been discovered, all share a number of common features. The most obvious is their origin in an oral tradition, as revealed by their anonymous authorship and brevity. Anonymous authorship is common in orally transmitted literature, and except for one story which does have a known author,¹² the *otogi zōshi* remain anonymous, in spite of persistent attempts to uncover their writers. They are also typically short, averaging some twenty to forty pages of a modern text, and none is longer than one hundred pages. This was the maximum length of a story that had to be read or recited in a single sitting. Some stories even reveal quite unambiguously that they were typically heard by their audiences rather than read in silence. For example, in *Hachikazuki* we find the words, 'All who hear this story',

⁸ Ichiko, p. 424.

⁹ Barbara Ruch, 'Origins of the Companion Library: An Anthology of Medieval Japanese Stories', in *Journal of Asian Studies*, xxx, 1971, p. 593.

¹⁰ Chieko Irie Mulhern, 'Otogi-zōshi, Short Stories of the Muromachi Period,' in *MN*, xxix, 1974, p. 183.

¹¹ Mulhern, p. 198, and Shimazu Hisamoto 島津久基, ed., *Otogi Zōshi* お伽草子, Iwanami

Shoten, 1961, p. 5.

¹² 'Tempitsu Wagō Rakuchi Fuku Kai Emman Hitsugetsu no Monogatari' 天筆和合楽地福皆円満筆結の物語; the precise meaning of this title is unclear. The story is about a family of badgers which act like humans. The author was a retired samurai, Ishii Yasunaga 石井康長 (religious name, Ihō 彝風), and he wrote the story on Bummei 12.1.11 (22 Feb 1480). Ichiko, pp. 388-9.

and in *Monokusa Tarō* ('Tarō the Loafer') there is a reference to 'The person who reads this to others'.¹³

Another characteristic *otogi zōshi* have in common, their emphasis on events and comparative lack of concern for details, is also typical of auditory literature. In order to be easily understood, stories intended for oral presentation require a particular kind of organization and emphasis. Very complicated plots or in-depth handling of psychological tensions might distract or bore their hearers. Too many crises in the lives of a large number of characters might be difficult for listeners to follow. Events in *otogi zōshi* are therefore given priority, and they usually take place in rapid succession without detailed descriptions of background, emotional tensions, or even natural surroundings. Both the number and the naming of characters are also generally limited to the bare minimum.

The typical allegation that the style of *otogi zōshi* is conventional and hackneyed¹⁴ also fails to appreciate that different genres require different styles. Standardized expressions and the repetition of key words and phrases often occur in auditory literature, and with considerable effect in the Homeric poems.¹⁵ That their use in *otogi zōshi* results from the genre's development from an oral tradition is specifically pointed out by Ichiko Teiji, the foremost scholar on the subject.¹⁶ A related feature of the style of the Muromachi short stories is their abundant use of alternating seven- and five-syllable phrases, which are widely used in Japanese poetry and other declamatory genres, such as *yōkyoku* (Noh texts), for their rhythmic and flowing effects. They are typically used in *otogi zōshi* to highlight certain critical stages in the development of the plot. It is somewhat paradoxical that the very scholars who insist on the origins of *otogi zōshi* in an oral tradition are at the same time able to view their plots and style so unfavorably.

The final and most striking common feature of *otogi zōshi* is the moral and religious lesson they seek to convey. They typically conclude with references to the rewards of religious belief and moral conduct, or to the merits of artistic achievements. Although these references are sometimes almost artificially appended to stories deriving from some oral tradition, the religious theme is carefully woven into the whole fabric of the better stories, whose plots become quite distinct from those of the oral traditions on which they were based.

This practice of borrowing stories from an oral tradition and then adding to them religious and moral messages was quite common in an earlier tradition, *bukkyō setsuwa* (Buddhist narratives). This tradition began with the compilation of the *Nihon Ryōiki* by the priest Kyōkai.¹⁷ In the Kamakura period, many more

¹³ 物くさ太郎, in Ichiko Teiji, ed., *Otogi Zōshi* [= oz], NKBT 38, Iwanami Shoten, 1958, p. 207.

¹⁴ Mulhern, p. 195.

¹⁵ G. G. Kirk, 'Heroic Age and Heroic Poetry', in Albert Cook, ed., *Homer, The Odyssey: A New Verse Translation . . .*, New York, 1974, pp. 351-63.

¹⁶ Ichiko, *Chūsei Shōsetsu*, p. 407.

¹⁷ 景戒, 786-866. Endō Yoshimoto 遠藤嘉基 & Kasuga Kazuo 春日和男, ed., *Nihon Ryōiki* 日本靈異記, NKBT 70, 1967; for English translation, see Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, ed., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*, Harvard U.P., 1973.

collections of Buddhist narratives appeared and were often used by monks as sermon materials in their preaching.

Otogi zōshi therefore share at least two common features with the Buddhist narrative tradition—their folklore origins and their didactic purpose. They might also have once been used by itinerant monks and nuns in spreading religious beliefs. In the medieval period, these men and women cut their ties with religious institutions and entered the secular world as traveling entertainers who lived by telling religious and secular stories. One group of storytellers was known as the *etoki hōshi*¹⁸ ('picture explainers'). To help in their work, they used specially illustrated scrolls and pointed to the appropriate pictures as they told their religious and, later, secular stories. Some scholars have noted the affinity between the words *togi* (keeping a person company) in *otogi*, and *toki* (elucidation) in *etoki*.¹⁹ These missionaries, according to Barbara Ruch, 'played an important part in introducing illustrated texts into the lives of the common people.'²⁰ It is quite likely that the illustrated texts developed into the illustrated books of *otogi zōshi*. The latter's distinct Buddhist flavor also suggests that they were the kind of story most likely included in the repertoire of the professional storytellers.

Whether or not *otogi zōshi* were actually used by these storytellers is not pertinent to assessing their artistic value. What is important is how naturally and successfully they convey their religious and moral messages. Fantastic or supernatural occurrences in Buddhist narratives and *otogi zōshi* are not in themselves signs of poor artistry, but can be and often are skillfully used to convey lessons that less spectacular happenings might fail to express.

To appreciate the literary value of *Hachikazuki* or of any other *otogi zōshi* therefore requires seeing them as belonging to a particular genre, whose characteristic features are important guides to what the critic must look for.

Plot and Organization

ALTHOUGH in Shibukawa's collection the story is titled *Hachikazuki*, it is popularly known as *Hachikatsugi*. *Hachi* means 'bowl', and both *kazuki* and *katsugi* are nominals of the verb *kazuku*, which means 'to put something on one's head'.

Like others of its type, the story is short and concentrates on the main events in the life of its female protagonist. It begins by briefly introducing her parents, who long to have a child. In response to their ardent prayers before the image of Kannon at the Hase temple,²¹ they are blessed with a daughter. Without any mention of the girl's childhood, the story moves on to the next important event,

¹⁸ 絵解法師

¹⁹ Araki Yoshio 荒木良雄, ed., *Chūsei Kamakura Muromachi Bungaku Jiten* 中世鎌倉室町文学事典, Shunjūsha, 1961, p. 156.

²⁰ Ruch, p. 603.

²¹ The popular name for Chōkokuji 長谷寺, the major temple of the Buzan 豊山 school of

the Shingon sect and located in Nara-ken; originally built around 720 by Dōmyō 道明. Its eleven-faced statue of Kannon gained the reputation of being particularly responsive to prayer. See Yoshiko K. Dykstra, 'Tales of the Compassionate Kannon—The *Hasedera Kannon Genki*', in *MN*, xxxi, 1976, pp. 113–43.

the death of her mother, who, just before she breathes her last, places a box on her daughter's head and covers it with a bowl, which becomes firmly attached to the poor girl's head. Her father remarries, and because his new wife hates the girl, he is forced to expel his daughter from home. Hachikazuki, as she is now called, tries to commit suicide by drowning in a river, but does not succeed because the bowl brings her to the surface.

In her subsequent wanderings, Hachikazuki attracts the eye of a middle-captain and becomes the fire-tender of the bath in his house. The family's fourth son, Saishō,²² notices the girl and falls in love with her in spite of her affliction. When he demonstrates that his love for her is greater than his family ties, the bowl falls off, revealing not only her beauty but its contents of riches. Events now rapidly turn in the girl's favor. After a contest in which she proves herself to be superior in all respects to the wives of the other three sons, she marries Saishō, who, although the youngest, is made his father's heir, and the couple live happily together. The story ends with a moving scene in which the girl and her father are reunited.

The plot is not indiscriminately constructed. Rather, the importance of each event in the girl's life is delicately weighed and given appropriate emphasis. Less important and less interesting occurrences are dealt with briefly with a few well-chosen words. For example, less than a line in the text is needed to convey the extent of the father's wealth: 'he was so wealthy that he lacked for nothing.' The account of his daughter's banishment from home reads simply: 'The stepmother pulled Hachikazuki toward her, stripped her of her clothes, and dressed her in a wretched unlined garment. Then Hachikazuki was abandoned at a crossroads in the middle of a wild field. Alas!' There is no mention of how or by whom she was taken to the field, although it was presumably not by the stepmother herself.

The rapid march of events is much more noticeable in the early part of Hachikazuki's life, at least until she meets Saishō. Later on, when critical and interesting things happen to her, for instance, when she first encounters Saishō and when she takes part in the wives' contest, descriptions become more detailed. When even a specific incident calls for the audience's sympathy, the unhappy situation is set forth in long, elaborate sentences. The rhythmic combinations of seven- and five-syllable phrases highlight the incident and appeal to the ear.

The briefly described events in the earlier part of the story are used to establish a setting, and the detailed descriptions in the later part serve to win sympathy for the hero and heroine.

The characters are selectively chosen and only the most essential ones are given names, while the introduction of the crowd and the description of its reaction to Hachikazuki gives the story a broader outlook. When a wider context is required to give the plot greater depth, events are viewed from the perspective of groups of characters. For example, the gathering for the wives' contest is seen through the

eyes of three groups of participants: the middle-captain's family, Saishō and Hachikazuki, and the spectators.

The merits of this careful organization in *Hachikazuki* become more evident when it is compared with two other *otogi zōshi* with similar plots. All three belong to a group of stories known as *mamako mono*²³ ('stepchild stories'), which portray the stepmother's cruelty toward her stepchild, usually a girl, and the latter's ultimate good fortune resulting, in most cases, from her marriage. *Hachikazuki*, *Hanayo no Hime* ('The Flower Princess'), and *Ubakawa*²⁴ ('The Garment that Makes One Old') are similar in that they all advocate faith in Kannon and describe how the Goddess grants the stepdaughter protagonists, who are her gifts to their parents, both protection and wealth.

Compared to *Hachikazuki*, however, *Hanayo no Hime* has nearly twice as many characters, including a prophetess and the wife of the samurai who removes the girl from her home. Since most of them—even the messenger boy—are given names, the reader's memory is overburdened with irrelevant details. The plot also consists of many complex incidents which would have been more suitable in a longer story. For instance, after the girl is abandoned in the mountain, accounts of what happened to her and to the people left at home are told in parallel. The reader's attention is constantly diverted, because almost equal weight is given to each incident and the focus of the narrative frequently shifts from the heroine to other people. The benevolence of Kannon is less obvious, since a mysterious old woman in the mountain comes to stand between the girl and Kannon. This woman is the actual provider of the garment which protects the girl and the bag which gives her wealth. As a result, the religious theme is considerably weakened and obscured, even though constant references are made to Kannon.

By comparison, the simplicity of *Hachikazuki*'s plot with its fewer incidents and characters makes the religious message of this story much clearer and more forceful. The narrative concentrates on the plight of the girl, and so increases the reader's curiosity about the bowl, which the dying mother places on the daughter's head. Her poem indicates that she does so to carry out the Goddess' instructions, and the bowl therefore becomes the symbol of mercy. Each subsequent event builds up suspense over its exact purpose, and raises the reader's expectation for Kannon to manifest her mercy.

The revelation of Kannon's power and mercy is effected in a more dramatic way than in *Hanayo no Hime*. On the day of the wives' contest, Saishō and Hachikazuki decide to leave home together. Many lines are devoted to describing their great sorrow, in order to emphasize that the bowl has brought only misery to the girl. But just as they are about to set off on their tearful journey, the bowl falls off with a crash, revealing the girl's extraordinary beauty and producing the rich treasure she so badly needs for the contest. The sharp contrast between the

²³ 継子物

²⁴ 花世の姫, うばかは. For the former, see Shimazu, pp. 55-98; an outline of the plot

and characters of the latter work is given in Ichiko, *Chūsei Shōsetsu*, p. 100.

hitherto tragic life of Hachikazuki and her happy and prosperous life hereafter effectively impresses the reader with the greatness of Kannon. The religious theme is therefore an integral and inseparable part of the plot.

The Bowl and Other Folklore Elements

IN *Hachikazuki* the *mamako mono* motif is combined with a variety of other folklore elements without in any way distracting from the coherence and unity of the story as a whole. The most important and conspicuous of these elements is the use of the bowl to signify and embody Kannon's mercy. Although Yanagita Kunio regarded the bowl as an unfortunate twist of *mamako mono* folklore,²⁵ *Hachikazuki*'s literary success seems very much to have depended on it. It is found neither in any other stepchild story in Japanese folklore nor in any previous written work. Although three similar folktales with bowl motifs are extant today, it is difficult to know whether or not they existed before *Hachikazuki*. Seki Keigo, the folklorist who collected them, simply concludes: 'It is worth investigating to what extent these present-day stories were influenced by the written work [*Hachikazuki*].'²⁶

A motif which performs a similar function to Hachikazuki's bowl is found in *Hanayo no Hime* and *Ukakawa*, and can be traced back to the Buddhist narrative and to various folklore traditions. The roles played by the bowl in *Hachikazuki* and by the garment in these other two stories are sufficiently similar to suggest a close connection between the bowl and the garment, and between *Hachikazuki* and the Buddhist narrative tradition.

Long before the Muromachi period a garment had become traditionally associated with Kannon's mercy in Buddhist narratives. In *Konjaku Monogatari* and *Uji Shūi Monogatari* one finds stories about a poor young woman who prays to the image of Kannon at Kiyomizu temple for the betterment of her condition. While at the temple, she is told in a dream to steal a piece of precious cloth from it. She follows the instruction and makes the cloth into a garment, and when she puts it on everything turns in her favor.²⁷ *Shasekishū* contains a similar story, but the garment is one which the girl was told to steal from a person nearby. She wears it on her way home and catches the eye of a wealthy man, who takes her as his wife.²⁸ The parallels with *Hachikazuki* are clear, although not complete.

²⁵ Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男, *Teihon Yanagita Kunio Shū* 定本柳田国男集, Chikuma Shobō, 1963, VIII, p. 306.

²⁶ Seki Keigo 関敬吾, *Nihon Mukashibanashi Shūsei: Dai Ni Bu Honkaku Mukashibanashi* 日本昔話集成, 第二部本格昔話, Kadokawa Shoten, 1962, II, p. 913.

²⁷ 'Mazushiki Onna Kiyomizu no Kannon ni Tsukamatsurite Michō o Tamaeru Koto' 貧女仕清水観音給御帳語, in Yamada Yoshio 山田孝雄 *et al.*, ed., *Konjaku Monogatari* 今昔物語, NKBT 24, pp. 485-6; and 'Kiyomizudera Michō o Tamawaru

Onna no Koto' 清水寺御帳給る女の事, in Nishio Kōichi 西尾光一 & Watanabe Tsunaya 渡辺綱也, ed., *Uji Shūi Monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語, NKBT 27, pp. 317-9.

²⁸ 'Yakushi Kannon Riyaku no Koto' 薬師観音利益の事, in Watanabe Tsunaya, ed., *Mujū* 無住 [1226-1312], *Shasekishū* 沙石集, NKBT 85, pp. 99-102. Yet another story involving a woman told to steal a garment and her subsequently marrying a rich man is found in *Hasedera Genki*: Dykstra, pp. 132-4.

Although the garment in *Hanayo no Hime* and *Ubakawa* also embodies Kannon's mercy, these stories are strongly influenced by folklore, since the girl appears old while she wears it. This effect of the garment, which is usually called *ubakawa* (*uba*, 'old woman'; *kawa*, 'skin'), occurs frequently in folklore. And the provider of the garment in folktales is usually a frog which was once rescued by the girl's father,²⁹ and the frog and the old woman in the mountain in *Hanayo no Hime* are believed to be closely related. Okada Keisuke says that the study of folklore suggests that the two were originally a single character, since both appear as servants of the same deity. One popular belief is that in spring the mountain deity comes down to the village and becomes the deity of the rice fields, and that after the harvest in autumn returns to the mountain. The frog is regarded as the servant of the rice-field deity, and in autumn is assumed to follow the deity to the mountain and to take on the form of an old woman. In *Hanayo no Hime* the old woman gives the girl a third gift (in addition to the garment and the bag), *hanagome*³⁰ (sacred rice), which keeps on feeding the girl without ever decreasing in supply. This gift lends support to the theory that the frog and the old woman were originally combined.³¹

Although the connection between the bowl, the garment, and the frog is not certain, a possible link may be found in the *kappa* legend. Origuchi Shinobu suggests a connection between the bowl and the *kappa*, an imaginary water deity which wears a plate on its head. The plate was regarded as a place for storing wealth and at first was possibly worn upside down, covering the head like a hat. Hachikazuki's bowl and the plate resemble each other in both their shape and in their mysterious power to conceal wealth.³² The legend of the *kappa* and that of the frog also seem to be related. In at least one part of Kyushu the former is still very much alive, and some of the locals say that *kappa* come down to the village in spring from the mountains and dwell wherever they find water, and that in autumn they return to the mountains.³³ The legends of the *kappa* and the frog might have originated from the same belief.³⁴

If the frog and the old woman were originally a single character, it is possible that the *kappa* legend was responsible for the garment's replacement by the bowl. The latter's function of disguising the girl and preventing her marriage is similar

²⁹ Seki, pp. 35-47 & 74-87.

³⁰ 花米

³¹ Okada Keisuke 岡田啓助, '*Muromachi Jidai Shōsetsu: Hachikazuki, Hanayo no Hime, Ubakawa Kō*' 室町時代小説「鉢かづき」「花世の姫」「うばかは」考, in *Kokugakuin Zasshi* 国学院雑誌, Sept 1966, pp. 50-61.

³² Origuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, '*Kappa no Hanashi*' 河童の話, in *Origuchi Shinobu Zenshū* 折口信夫全集, Chūō Kōron Sha, 1955, III, pp. 310-1.

³³ I heard this in Myōken-chō, Yatsushiro-shi in Kumamoto prefecture as recently as

1973.

³⁴ Both the *kappa* and the frog appear in identical plots in folklore. In Seki's types 101b & 101c, a farmer with three daughters offers one of them in marriage to whoever waters his rice paddies. In 101b a snake, and in 101c a *kappa*, do the job, and the youngest daughter accepts the marriage but cleverly manages to escape from it. Although the snake is the future bridegroom in 101b, a frog features as the giver of the *ubakawa* to the girl. Neither the frog nor the *ubakawa* appears in the other type, 101c. Seki, pp. 35-50.

to that of the garment, which was originally worn by a virgin who served the gods. While she wore it, she was sacred and could not marry. But after the disappearance of the custom, all that was remembered was that the wearer of such a garment was ineligible for marriage. The garment therefore turns the girl into an old woman, implying that she cannot marry. But since the bowl's shape and function of concealing wealth more closely resemble the plate on the *kappa*'s head, it is possible that at least in Osaka, where *Hachikazuki* is set, the *kappa* legend, that of the frog, and the Buddhist narratives were related.

Other explanations of the origin of the bowl motif are also possible. Closer to its shape than the garment is the *fuka amigasa*³⁵ (deep straw-hat), which a stepdaughter in a folktale wears in order to hide her face from her stepmother at a festival.³⁶ The *fuka amigasa* was traditionally used as a disguise, and it is quite possible that the bowl motif came from this custom. But this type of hat was also part of the costume of the medieval storytellers. *Hachikazuki*'s unambiguous spiritual message makes it a likely favorite among the religious storytellers engaged in spreading faith in Kannon. In her dissertation on Japanese folklore, Ikeda Hiroko points out that stepchild stories were particularly popular with female storytellers,³⁷ and Yanagita even suggested that the *uta bikuni* (singing nuns) were responsible for the transmission of *Hachikazuki*.³⁸ According to *Kiyū Shōran*,³⁹ a book from the Edo period, the *uta bikuni* wore a hat known as *kaga gasa*, and virgins who took part in a festival in Fukushima district wore one called *kikyō gasa*.⁴⁰ Yanagita believed that the *bikuni* replaced the *ubakawa* with a bowl simply because they fancied the extraordinary,⁴¹ but this is unlikely because nuns would have regarded a hat as a most natural and obvious disguise. However, because a straw hat wears out quickly and can easily be removed, a similarly shaped bowl may have been regarded as more appropriate for the nearly permanent disguise required by *Hachikazuki*.

A third possible explanation may be found in a Buddhist custom whereby monks carried with them bowls in which to receive offerings. *Hachikazuki*'s bowl may well symbolize the Buddhist concept of love and charity. By wearing the bowl, she cries out for love, and as soon as she finds it, the bowl falls off.

It is difficult to decide which influence was the greatest. The *fuka amigasa*'s shape and purpose probably played a part, and the power of the plate on the *kappa*'s head as well as this figure's being a water deity, the importance of which is discussed later, suggest strong ties with the *kappa* legend. The religious purpose of the *otogi zōshi* makes the third explanation equally convincing. More than likely, the choice of the bowl resulted from all three influences.

³⁵ 深編笠

³⁶ Seki, p. 827.

³⁷ Hiroko Ikeda, 'A Type and Motif Index of Japanese Folk Literature,' dissertation Indiana University, 1955, p. 361.

³⁸ Yanagita, viii, p. 306.

³⁹ Kitamura Nobuyo (or Tokinobu) 喜多村信節 [1784–1856], Kondō Keizō 近藤圭造, ed., *Kiyū Shōran* 嬉遊笑覧, Meicho Kankōkai, 1970, I, p. 269.

⁴⁰ 加賀笠, ききょう笠

⁴¹ Yanagita, viii, p. 306.

Compared to the garment, the bowl is a handier symbol, since the former's role is limited to providing protection. In *Hanayo no Hime* the girl is therefore also given the bag which produces the treasure, and in *Ubakawa* she must get by with protection alone. The bowl, however, can both shield the girl and produce riches, and it even allows Saishō to display some of his own moral fiber.

Unlike the garment, which can be taken off and which allows the future husband to see the girl as she really is before falling in love with her, the bowl cannot be removed and partly conceals Hachikazuki's face, preventing Saishō from knowing exactly what she looks like. After only a partial glimpse of her physical qualities, he is unshakably committed, and his fidelity is all the more admirable because so many people regard her as a monster. This is highlighted by the behavior of the official, who, although finding Hachikazuki extraordinarily beautiful in a number of ways, decides against his impulse to approach her, for fear of what people might say. Saishō's love for her and his independence of spirit are then severely tested, and when he comes through unscathed, he is rewarded by having the bowl fall off, revealing her unblemished, and by becoming the family heir. But unlike similar motifs in Western stories, such as *Beauty and the Beast*,⁴² the bowl does not make Hachikazuki into a complete monster. By allowing Saishō to view some of her beauty, it makes his deep commitment understandable and not merely admirable.

The bowl also teaches Hachikazuki, through suffering, the virtues of patience, kindness, and mercy itself. When she is reunited with her father, who had consented to her expulsion from home, she shows no resentment and greets him without hesitation. Even toward her stepmother she is considerate. She never reveals her true identity to her husband for fear that the stepmother's reputation might be harmed, and to the end she takes no action of revenge.⁴³ Hachikazuki has learned to be merciful herself. Thus the bowl is integral to the religious and didactic purpose of the story.

Next to the bowl, the second most important motif in *Hachikazuki* is water. It was by drowning in a river that the girl tries to commit suicide, and her inability to do so associates her with the water deity. The kind of work she does in the middle-captain's house is also significant. In stepchild stories known as 'Cinderella' folktales in the West, the stepdaughter is either engaged in some kind of domestic work or appears as a servant. In some Japanese folktales, as well as in *Hachikazuki* and the other two Muromachi stories mentioned above, she is a fire-tender for the bath. Although in these stories the task is considered humble, in ancient times it had religious significance, and women who served in bathhouses were accorded special respect. Its importance in *Hachikazuki* is greater than in the others, because

⁴² Mme Leprince de Beaumont, 'Beauty and the Beast', in A. E. Johnson *et al.*, trans., *Perrault's Complete Fairy Tales*, London, 1962, pp. 115-34.

⁴³ In contrast to the heroine in *Hanayo no*

Hime, who does not acquire any apparent virtues from her experience, and the stepmother and her associates are duly punished in the end.

the girl not only boils bathwater as do the other servants but is also summoned to serve Saishō while he is taking a bath.

Water is used in many Shinto purification ceremonies, and the allusion is to an ancient custom by which the emperor was cleansed just before playing a sacred role in rituals. First, he had to go through a transitional period during which he cut himself off from all activities which were regarded as unclean, such as drinking and sexual contact. Throughout this period, he wore a special kind of loincloth, which he removed only when taking the bath to purify himself before commencing his symbolic life as a god. Certain sacred women were especially employed to help him undo the loincloth, and the emperor, freed of all restraint, often fell in love with some of them while they served him.⁴⁴

By boiling bathwater, Hachikazuki is given an opportunity to meet a nobleman, and it is at the very time of taking a bath that Saishō first notices her, whereupon he falls in love with her. Because his hasty overtures may seem too sudden and unnatural to a modern audience, which knows little of the ancient tradition, writers of modern versions of the story give the girl additional qualities, such as kindness and thoughtfulness, which make her more attractive.

Although an emperor's love for the sacred women may have been short-lived, Saishō's is not. When he proves that it is stronger than any other tie, his family accepts Hachikazuki as his formal wife and permits him to become the heir, even though he is the fourth and youngest son. Stories which portray the triumph of the youngest child are extremely common in the folklore of the East as well as the West, and they particularly appeal to the common people, who are in a situation similar to that of the youngest child, often despised and oppressed.

The last event in the story, the reunion of Hachikazuki and her father, was also rooted in a folk belief, namely, the idea that Hase temple is the most likely place for a reunion. It was both the temple of Kannon and, according to an ancient belief, one of several places in the country where souls would be reunited. With the introduction of Buddhism, the image of Kannon was believed to bring people together. *Hasedera Genki* describes many reunions which took place at Hase temple between lovers or between mothers and their lost sons.⁴⁵ In *Genji Monogatari*, during her pilgrimage to the temple, Tamakazura meets her dead mother's old nurse after nearly twenty years of separation.⁴⁶

The blending of a variety of folktale elements makes *Hachikazuki* the most original of the *mamako mono* group of *otogi zōshi*. Far from representing 'an unfortunate twist of folklore', the bowl is in fact the first step toward the story's success. A variety of well-known folklore elements are woven together with ease, and a religious theme gives the story a natural wholeness. Shibukawa's decision to select *Hachikazuki* for his collection out of many *mamako mono* could hardly have been an arbitrary choice.

⁴⁴ Origuchi, II, pp. 96-9.

⁴⁵ Nagai Yoshinori 永井義憲, ed., *Hasedera Genki* (*ihon*) 長谷寺験記・異本, Koten Bunko

古典文庫, 1953.

⁴⁶ Book 1, 'Tamakazura' 玉鬘.

The author of this work, like other *otogi zōshi*, is unknown. Yanagita believed that the *uta bikuni* played an important part in creating it by replacing the garment with a bowl, but he provided no evidence for this conclusion. It is in fact as difficult to determine the extent to which the transmitters of *Hachikazuki* were involved in its creation as it is to assess the contribution of any individual author. An examination of different *Hachikazuki* texts provides no clues, because few discrepancies can be found. Most extant manuscripts are almost identical to printed texts, the earliest of which were published during the Kan'ei era, 1624–44. Only three of these manuscripts were written before printed texts, possibly in the late Muromachi or early Edo period, and they are on the whole similar to the printed ones, the only differences being in minor details and in the latter part of the story where fuller descriptions are offered.⁴⁷

The text used for the translation is found in *Otogi Zōshi* of the *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* series, edited by Ichiko Teiji. This is a reproduction of the one in Shibukawa's collection and is regarded as the standard text by modern editors and commentators.

⁴⁷ Matsumoto Takanobu 松本隆信, ed., | 集成, Kyūko Shoin, 1970, 1, pp. 261–2, & 11, *Eiin Muromachi Monogatari Shūsei* 影印室町物語 | pp. 298–9.

Hachikazuki

NOT so long ago, somewhere in Katano in the province of Kawachi,⁴⁸ there lived a man by the name of Sanetaka, Governor of Bitchū,⁴⁹ who was so wealthy that he lacked for nothing. He was very fond of poetry and music, and used to spend his time standing beneath the cherry trees, lamenting the falling of the blossoms, writing Japanese and Chinese poems, or else gazing at the serene sky. His wife spent her time reading the *Kokinshū*, *Man'yōshū*, *Ise Monogatari*, and other stories, or stayed up all night with the moon, lamenting when the morning came. She had no disquieting thoughts, and nothing disturbed their strong marriage pledge. Despite their closeness one thing caused them constant grief—they had no children. Then miraculously one day they were blessed with a daughter, and their joy was indescribable. They treasured her and took infinite care of her. As they had always believed in Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy, they made frequent pilgrimages to the image in Hase, and prayed for their daughter's prosperity and happiness.⁵⁰

The years passed, and one day when the maiden was in her thirteenth year, her mother fell ill with what she believed was a cold. But within a few days, it was obvious that she was about to die. She summoned her daughter to the bedside and stroking her glossy black hair said, 'Oh, what a pity it is! If only I could look after you until you were seventeen or eighteen and see you married, I would die in peace. How sorry I am to abandon you while your future is so uncertain and you are still so young.' She could not restrain her tears. The maiden also wept.

Choking back her tears, the mother picked up her toilet case, into which it seems she had put something. Then, although it looked very heavy, she placed it on her daughter's head and covered it with a bowl, which almost came down to the maiden's shoulders. She recited the following poem:

<i>Sashimogusa</i>	All sentient beings
<i>Fukakuzo tanomu</i>	Totally depend on you.
<i>Kanzeon</i>	O Kannon,
<i>Chikai no mama ni</i>	In my solemn oath to you
<i>Itadakasenuru.</i>	I made my daughter bear the box. ⁵¹

⁴⁸ Present-day Hirakata-shi, Osaka-fu. In the Heian period, Katano was an imperial hunting ground and was also known for its cherry blossom.

⁴⁹ As he was not actually living in Bitchū, present-day Okayama-ken, he was probably only the nominal governor.

⁵⁰ Various stories of such pilgrimages to

Hase are given in Dykstra, pp. 123–43.

⁵¹ The poem refers back to an earlier poem (*Shin Kokinshū*, #1971), in which Kannon promises to help all those who have faith. 'Sashimogusa' literally means 'mugwort herb', but in the context of both this and the earlier poem it can be translated as 'sentient beings'.

Then the mother breathed her last. Deeply shocked, the father cried out, 'How could you leave such a young girl and disappear to the unknown land?' But his cry was in vain. Although parting was hard, they could not keep the mother's body and so they took it to a desolate field for burial. Nothing but smoke was left of her. How sad that such a beautiful and noble face, which shone like the moon, should vanish into the wind.

The father called the maiden to his side and tried to remove the bowl she was wearing, but it was stuck too tightly. He became agitated and called out, 'What shall we do? You have only just separated from your mother. How wretched that such a monstrous thing has attached itself to you.' His grief was boundless.

As the days and months passed the father carried out regular memorial services for his deceased wife, according to the Buddhist custom. He was also worried about the maiden. 'In the springtime,' he thought, 'when the blossoms have fallen, I am always saddened by green leaves showing here and there on the plum branches by the eaves or on the tops of cherry trees. But next spring these trees will flower again. And the moon descends behind a mountain, but it will rise again the following evening, though that night will be new.'⁵² Images of the dead appear obscurely in dreams. But when someone has departed for Hades,⁵³ we never meet that person again in reality.'

His imagination ran away with him, like the wheels of a cart, and like the spinning of the cartwheels, his thoughts had no end. Even strangers were filled with pity.

So the father's relatives and close friends gathered together to advise him not to remain alone. 'Though you lament your wife's death, wetting with tears the sleeves on which you rest your head, it is all in vain. Marry some woman and ease your sorrow.'

In response to their pleas, the father resolved to forget his wife and reflected on his own loneliness. He would lament her no more and he agreed to accept any marriage they arranged. His relatives were delighted and found a suitable woman, whom the father married. A man's mind changes, just as a flower fades away with the passing of time.⁵⁴ The dead mother was forgotten, just as red maple leaves, which fall in autumn, are no longer remembered in spring. Only the maiden recalled her with pain.

When the stepmother saw the girl, she thought to herself, 'What a strange and awkward creature,' and she hated her intensely. When her own child was born, she desired neither to see Hachikazuki, as she was now called, nor to hear her voice. She lied about the girl's activities and slandered her before her father.

Heartbroken, Hachikazuki went to her mother's tomb and cried, 'My sad world

⁵² An alternative text, the *Manji Ninen Matsue Ban* 万治二年松会板, has: 'In the springtime, although plum and cherry blossoms by the eaves fall to the ground, they will flower again next spring. And while the moon de-

scends behind a mountain, it will rise again the following evening.' oz, p. 60, n. 4.

⁵³ *Yomi no kuni* 黄泉の国

⁵⁴ A reference to a poem by Ono no Komachi 小野小町: *Kokinshū*, 113.

has become even more melancholy. The yearning tears I shed stream down my face, yet I cannot drown myself in them but must live with this worthless body. I do so hate the strange and monstrous thing which has stuck to me. No wonder my stepmother hates me. When I was abandoned by my dear mother, I was concerned how my father would grieve if I died. Now that my stepmother has a daughter by him, I need no longer worry. Because of her hatred, the father on whom I had depended has become distant from me. Seeing that life has lost all its meaning for me, Mother, please take me to paradise forthwith. When I also am reborn in a lotus flower there,⁵⁵ we shall be together again.'

She wept bitterly in longing, but the dead mother made no reply.

When the stepmother heard of this, she said to her husband, 'How frightening that Hachikazuki visits her mother's tomb and puts a curse on all of us!' Thus she lied to him again and again.

Men being gullible, the father believed her and summoned his daughter.

'How wicked you are! Because of the extraordinary and terrible thing that has become attached to you, I have taken great pity on you. Nevertheless, to my amazement you have put a curse on your innocent mother and sister.'

Then he told his wife, 'We need not keep someone so twisted. Send her away.' The stepmother smiled to herself very happily.

Now, cruelty of cruelties, she pulled Hachikazuki toward her, stripped her of her clothes, and dressed her in a wretched unlined garment. Then Hachikazuki was abandoned at a crossroads in the middle of a wild field. Alas!

'Oh, what a monstrous world!' Hachikazuki thought. Lost in the dark and not knowing where to go, she could only cry. Presently she recited this poem:

<i>No no sue no</i>	By the edge of the moors
<i>Michi fumiwakete</i>	I beat a pathway through the bush.
<i>Izuku to mo</i>	But how shall I go?
<i>Sashite yukinan</i>	I wonder, as I struggle on
<i>Mi to wa omowazu.</i>	Not knowing where my feet take me. ⁵⁶

She began to wander about aimlessly and finally came to the bank of a large river. There she stood, thinking that instead of roaming hither and thither she should drown herself and join her mother. Yet, when she looked at the river, the waves beating on the banks frightened her; those in the shallow waters were white and rough with foam, while the surface of the deep made her shudder. With the weakness of youth, she was horrified and hesitated; but then the thought of reunion with her mother quickly helped her to make up her mind, and she murmured:

⁵⁵ According to popular belief, after death a person is reborn in a lotus flower in a pond in paradise.

⁵⁶ Another text, the *Kiyomizu bon* 清水本, has the following poem: 'Oh how wretched am

I! / Though there may be many roads / Along which I wander, / No matter which one I take / How can I ever find my way?' oz, p. 63, n. 12.



From a 17th-century *narai-bon*.

*Kawagishi no
Yanagi no ito no
Hitosuji ni
Omoikuru mi o
Kami mo tasukeyo.*

Upon the river banks
Where the willow branches droop
In single strands of threads,
I stand and pray with all my might
For the gods to grant me help.

Then she threw herself into the deep waters, but the bowl brought her to the surface. As she floated down the river with her head high above it, a fisherman passed by. 'How strange that a bowl is floating along,' he exclaimed. 'What could it be?' When he hauled it up, he saw that it had a bowl for a head but the body of a human being, and he cried out, 'How surprising!⁵⁷ What on earth can it be?' Then he tossed it onto the bank.

After a while, Hachikazuki sat up, pondered what had happened, and uttered these words:

*Kawanami no
Soko ni kono mi no
Tomarekashi
Nado futatabi wa
Ukiagariken.*

Oh, how I wish
That my body had remained
At the bottom of the river.
Why is it
That I have risen again?

⁵⁷ The text known as *Manji Ninen Takahashi* | frightening!') here, instead of *omoshiro ya*.
Ban 万治二年高橋板 has *osoroshi ya* ('how

Then, looking rather confused and more dead than alive, she got up. As she could not just stand there, she wandered on at random till she came to a village.

When the inhabitants saw her, they exclaimed, 'What kind of thing is this? It has the head of a bowl and the body of a human being. Surely in some remote mountain an old bowl has been bewitched and it is still stuck there on the head of the apparition.'⁵⁸ It is certainly not a human being.' They pointed at her and laughed nervously.

Someone said, 'Monster or not, she does have beautiful hands and feet.' The others agreed.

The governor of the district was a third-ranking court official, the Middle-Captain of Yamakage.⁵⁹ Hachikazuki passed by just as he was strolling along his veranda, looking at the surrounding trees and thinking, 'How wonderful it would be to have someone I love to share this charming evening with me. We could watch together the thin trails of smoke from the mugworts which the villagers burn against the mosquitoes, drifting in the distant sky.'

When he saw Hachikazuki, he ordered his men, 'Summon that girl.' A few young attendants ran out and brought her in. 'Where have you come from⁶⁰ and who are you?' the Middle-Captain asked.

'I am from Katano,' Hachikazuki replied. 'My mother died while I was still young, and to compound my sorrow, this misshapen thing became attached to me. No one would have anything to do with me. There was no use staying at Naniwa Bay,⁶¹ and I went wherever my feet carried me.'

Hearing this, the Middle-Captain took pity on her and ordered his men to remove the bowl. They gathered around her and tried, but it was hopeless. The gentlefolk looked on and asked in jest, 'What kind of monster is she?'

When the Middle-Captain saw that the bowl would not come off, he asked her, 'Hachikazuki, where do you intend to go now?'

'I have nowhere to go,' she replied. 'My mother is dead, and this terrible thing is stuck to me. Everyone I meet is frightened and disgusted, but no one takes pity on me.'

'It is good for a man to have something outlandish in his possession,' the Middle-Captain said, and in accordance with his instructions she was kept in the mansion.

'What skills have you?' the Middle-Captain asked her.

'None worth mentioning,' she replied. 'While my mother looked after me I learned to play the *koto*, the *biwa*, the *wagon*, the *shō*, and the *hichiriki*.⁶² I also used

⁵⁸ According to *On'yō Zakki* 陰陽雜記 ('Miscellaneous Records of Yang and Ying'), a utensil would be possessed by a spirit (*tsukumo gami* 付喪神), change its form, and bewitch people. oz, p. 63, n. 20.

⁵⁹ 山蔭の三位中将

⁶⁰ The Middle-Captain's expression is, '*Izuku no ura*' ('From which bay?'), and seems to be an allusion to Hachikazuki's relationship

with water.

⁶¹ The name is a pun, for it can mean both 難波の浦 (the Bay of Osaka) and 何はの浦 (any bay).

⁶² For illustrations of these musical instruments, see Ivan Morris, *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon: A Companion Volume*, Oxford U.P., 1967, p. 246.

to read *Kokinshū*, *Man'yōshū*, *Ise Monogatari*, the Lotus Scripture in eight volumes, and other Scriptures. Apart from this I have no skills.'

'In that case let her work in the bathhouse,' he ordered.

Although Hachikazuki had never performed such a task before, times had changed for her and she made the fire in the bathhouse. The next day, when the members of the household saw her, they laughed and made fun of her. Many were disgusted, and none felt compassion. Demands for a bath were constant. She was kept up without pity until well after midnight and roused long before dawn. When summoned, she would sit up looking as fragile as young bamboo, which straightens itself slowly after lying on the ground covered with heavy snow. She watched the smoke from the fire, woefully thinking that when people saw it rising, they would certainly talk about the person making the fire.

Someone would always be there to push her on. 'The bathwater is ready. Take it to the tub!' In the evening the same voice would order her, 'Boil some water for washing feet, Hachikazuki.' One day she got up sorrowfully, took some scattered firewood, and composed this verse:

<i>Kurushiki wa</i>	It is painful
<i>Oritaku shiba no</i>	To see the faggots which I break and burn
<i>Yūkeburi</i>	Go up in evening smoke.
<i>Uki mi to tomo ni</i>	Would that in my misery
<i>Tachiya kiemashi.</i>	I might rise with it and fade away.

She complained bitterly. 'What did I do in my previous life that I must endure such sorrow? How long must I keep on living? I think like this even in my sleep. When I remember my happy past, my heart burns inside like Mount Fuji in the province of Suruga, and my sleeves get soaked like the barrier of Kiyomi,⁶³ against which the waves splash. How long must this go on? I cannot endure such hardship, and tears keep flowing down my cheeks. I do not know what fate awaits me. My life is as ephemeral as that of dewdrops on chrysanthemum leaves. I wonder what will become of me.'

And while she kept on boiling water for washing feet, she recited this poem:

<i>Matsukaze no</i>	Wind sighing through the pines,
<i>Sora fukiharō</i>	Won't you blow into the sky
<i>Yo ni idete</i>	Out upon the world,
<i>Sayakeki tsuki o</i>	And bring a clear bright moon
<i>Itsuka nagamen.</i>	For me to enjoy sometime.

The Middle-Captain had four sons, three of whom were married. The fourth, His Lordship Saishō, was most handsome and as gentle and graceful—if one looks for examples in the past—as Prince Genji or Ariwara no Narihira.⁶⁴

⁶³ 清見が関, located in present-day Okitsu-chō, Shimizu-shi, Shizuoka-ken, was known for its beautiful beach.

⁶⁴ The heroes of *Genji Monogatari* and *Ise*

Monogatari respectively. The latter is one of the 36 Poetic Geniuses, and because he was very handsome and wrote many passionate love poems, he is regarded as the hero of *Ise*.

In the spring he would spend time under the cherry trees, lamenting the falling of the blossoms; in summer he took an interest in the water-plants that grew at the bottom of the cool stream. In autumn he would admire the red maples in the garden scattering their crimson leaves and he would stay up all night looking at the moon; in winter he would watch with lonely longing a pair of mandarin ducks,⁶⁵ asleep with their wings closed as they both floated along the edge of the pond, where thin ice formed among the reeds. Because he had no wife with whom to sleep sleeve upon sleeve, he amused himself as he pleased.

One day, Saishō's elder brothers and mother had already taken a bath, but he had not yet done so. Later that night he entered the bathhouse alone. Hachikazuki's voice, 'I will bring some hot water, sir,' sounded most charming to him. And when she handed the water to him with the words, 'For your bath,' her hands and feet looked very beautiful and elegant.

He became curious and said, 'Well, Hachikazuki, as no one is around, there will be no trouble, so come and wash my back.' Hachikazuki could still remember how she used to have someone do the same for her, and she wondered how she could do it for another. But her master's command left her no choice, and she went to the bathhouse.

Looking at her, the master thought that although Kawachi was a small province and although he had met many people, he had never beheld such a dainty, such an outstandingly charming and beautiful girl as her. One year he had gone to the capital during cherry blossom time, and he had been flower viewing at Omuro temple,⁶⁶ where people of all ranks gathered at the market place in front of the temple gate, but he had never seen anyone comparable to Hachikazuki. He thought that no matter what people might say, he would not be able to put her out of his mind.

'Hachikazuki,' he said, 'I have fallen in love with you, and while the color of crimson may fade, my feelings will never change.' He promised that their love would last forever, like the pine tree that lives a thousand years or the tortoises of Pine-Tree Bay.⁶⁷

But Hachikazuki remained silent, like a nightingale unwilling to fly away from a flowering plum tree by the eaves.

'I hope our love is not like the Tatsuta River,'⁶⁸ he said. 'Like a silent *kuchinashi*⁶⁹ flower, you do not answer me. Or like a lute which often has more than one player,

⁶⁵ Because male and female ducks are believed to be faithful to each other, they are often used to illustrate the intimate relationship between a man and his wife.

⁶⁶ The popular name for Ninnaji in Kyoto. Founded in 888, it is well known for its cherry blossom, which blooms later than other cherry blossom.

⁶⁷ *Matsu no ura* 松の浦 does not refer to any specific place, but is an allusion to longevity.

According to a popular saying, pine trees live for a thousand years and tortoises for ten thousand.

⁶⁸ 竜田川, in Ikoma-gun, Nara-ken. A reference to *Kokinshū*, 283, which alludes to the breaking up of a love affair.

⁶⁹ Cape jasmine, but there is a pun involved as the name can literally mean 'without a mouth'.

you may have another admirer. If you already have someone who visits you and sends you letters, and if I cannot meet you again, I will not think ill of you, for you are so charming.’

Although Hachikazuki was sturdy of heart, like an untamed steed, she could not utter a word, because she had been left to her own devices for so long and knew nothing of lovers’ ways. But she was so shy that he thought she had another lover.

‘You compared me to a lute,’ she said, ‘but since all my strings are broken, there can be no other player. I am always sad, thinking about my mother whom I lost so early. I constantly regret that I have to remain in this unhappy world, unable even to become a nun.’

His Lordship Saishō agreed and said, ‘As you say, how uncertain it is to be born in this transient and fleeting world. Not knowing what hardships we must suffer because of our deeds in a previous life, we live in resentment of the gods and Buddhas for subjecting us to such toil. In a previous life you must have caused someone grief by separating lovers, as one would break a twig from a tree in a field,⁷⁰ so that now you are separated from your mother and have so much heartache while still young, daily dampening your bed with tears. I myself am already twenty and still have not taken a wife. It seems that I have been sleeping alone without anyone to share my pillow because I loved you so deeply in a previous life. I was destined to love you in this one, and after so many years, fate has at last brought you here.

‘Though there have been beautiful women, I could not care for them, as my destiny was to be with you. That is why I love you very deeply. Please believe my words. The islands where whales take refuge, the fields where tigers sleep, the deepest part of the sea—everything on this side of the six destinies and the four kinds of births, and everything on the other side of the Nirvana-shore of that river of man and maid—all these may change, but the bond between you and me shall never be altered.’⁷¹

Such was his firm pledge.

Hachikazuki remained as rigid as an anchored boat, but overwhelmed by his words, she began to put her trust in him.

That night they lay together, but she was perturbed by the thought that even though he had promised eternal love, their future was still unsettled, like molten iron. Should she not just disappear somewhere before people came to know of her love?

Saishō was very touched and said, ‘How now, Hachikazuki, why are you so melancholy? I will never treat you with less care than I now do. I will return in the evening.’ Actually, he visited her a few times even during the daytime.⁷²

⁷⁰ This sentence can also mean that she made a young twig suffer by breaking it off a tree, thus separating it from its parent.

⁷¹ On the suggestion of Professor Leon Hurvits, I have taken the text to read 五道輪廻, 六道四生のこなたなる, instead of the obscure

reading of the original, 五道輪廻のあなたなる, 六道四生のこなたなる.

⁷² This sentence seems to contradict what follows if it is taken to mean that he visited her a few times on that particular day.

‘Comfort yourself with these,’ he said as he gave her a *tsuge* pillow⁷³ and a flute.

By this time Hachikazuki was overpowered by feelings of shame. ‘If I were an ordinary girl—even though a man’s mind can change like the Asuka river, which sometimes shifts its bed overnight⁷⁴—I would believe you. I am so ashamed to have been revealed to you in my present unworthy state,’ she wailed.

As he looked at her, His Lordship thought that if he were to compare her to anything, she was as fragrant as myrtle or peach blossoms and as dazzling as the moon coming out of the clouds. She was like a weeping willow, blowing in the mid-spring wind, and her face, turned aside shyly like a fragile pink inside a bamboo fence bending its head under the heavy dew, was so charming and beautiful that he wondered whether Yang Kuei-fei or Madam Li could have surpassed her beauty.⁷⁵ If possible, he thought, he would like to remove the bowl and see her face as fully as the full moon.

Saishō then left her room beside the bathhouse where the firewood was piled. On his way to his own quarters, even a plum tree by the eaves reminded him of Hachikazuki, and he thought how lonely she must be. Waiting for the approach of evening seemed even longer than watching a young pine tree at Sumiyoshi Shrine become a thousand years old.⁷⁶

Hachikazuki did not know what to do with the *tsuge* pillow and the flute, because she had no place to keep them.

The first cockcrow announced the break of day, and while the bank of morning clouds was still in the sky, she was being nagged, ‘Bathwater, Hachikazuki!’

‘The water is ready. Please take it,’ she replied, breaking off some firewood now wet with her tears and putting it into the fire. Then she recited this poem:

<i>Kurushiki wa</i>	It is so painful
<i>Oritaku shiba no</i>	To see the faggots which I break and burn
<i>Yūkeburī</i>	Go up in evening smoke.
<i>Koishiki kata e</i>	It must certainly have spread
<i>Nado nabikuran.</i>	To my loved one’s dwelling place.

The official in charge of the bathhouse heard her and thought that although she had an unusual head, her charming voice, her smile, and her beautiful hands and feet were far superior to those of the ladies who were living there. He approached her intending to become her lover, but when he saw that her face was partly concealed—he could only see from her mouth down but not from her nose up—

⁷³ 黄楊の枕, a pillow made of boxwood; the word often appears in love poems, because *tsuge* also means ‘to tell [one’s inner feelings]’.

⁷⁴ 飛鳥河 is in Nara-ken and was known for the rapid shifting of its pools and shoals.

⁷⁵ Yang Kuei-fei (J. Yōkihi) 楊貴妃 was the beloved concubine of Emperor Hsuan Tsung in T’ang China; Madam Li (J. Ri Fujin) 李

夫人 was a concubine of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty. Both women were renowned for their beauty.

⁷⁶ The pine trees in Sumiyoshi 住吉 and Takasago 高砂 are known as husband and wife; they feature in the Noh play *Takasago*, which treats of conjugal happiness.

he naturally gave up the idea, thinking that his friends would laugh at him.

Although the spring days were long, this one finally ended. As dusk fell people became lively and cheerful, like moonflowers. His Lordship Saishō, dressed more splendidly than ever, stood outside her wretched room.

Unaware of his presence, Hachikazuki thought that the sunset, their time of tryst, had passed. It was late and the dogs in the village had started to bark at passers-by. Picking up the pillow and flute he had left, she cried,

<i>Kimi kon to</i>	You'll come back to me,
<i>Tsuge no makura ya</i>	The <i>tsuge</i> pillow you pledged.
<i>Fue take no</i>	But your promise
<i>Nado fushi ōki</i>	Is as empty as your flute
<i>Chigiri naruran</i>	Carved out of hollow bamboo.

Saishō quickly replied,

<i>Ikuchiyo to</i>	For a thousand ages
<i>Fushisoite min</i>	Let us sleep side by side.
<i>Kuretake no</i>	Like Chinese bamboo
<i>Chigiri wa taeji</i>	May our promises of love endure
<i>Tsuge no makura ni.</i>	With our pillow of <i>tsuge</i> wood.

He loved her very much and promised that they would be like a pair of birds which fly side by side and like trees that stand side by side.

They tried to keep their love secret, but people came to know of it. 'It is His Lordship Saishō who is visiting Hachikazuki. How terrible! Of course, women have lovers, noble or humble. But even if he does go to see her, she must lack modesty to think of approaching him.' Everyone found her behavior offensive.

One day a guest came, and as Saishō was kept up most of the night and was late in visiting Hachikazuki, she felt most uneasy and recited this poem:

<i>Hito machite</i>	While waiting for you,
<i>Uwa no sora nomi</i>	Only on the empty sky
<i>Nagamureba</i>	Did I fix my gaze.
<i>Tsuyukeki sode ni</i>	And on my tear-dampened sleeves
<i>Tsuki zo yadoreru.</i>	Light from the moon was glowing.

When he heard this, he loved her even more tenderly and deeply. He thought that he would never give her up.

Ever since time began, people have been in the habit of gossiping about things which do not concern them. They eagerly seized upon this affair. 'His Lordship Saishō acts as if there is no other girl in the world. He must be very odd.'

Saishō's mother came to hear of it. 'They may be talking nonsense,' she said, 'but have the nurse look into the matter.'

Having done so, the nurse reported that the rumors were true. The mother and the father were speechless.

His mother said, 'Listen, nurse, go and talk with His Lordship Saishō, and see to it that he does not go near Hachikazuki again.'

The nurse went to His Lordship, talked about a number of things, and then said cautiously, 'Young master, while it may not be true, your mother has heard a rumor that you have been visiting Hachikazuki, the bathwater boiler. She told me she did not think it was true, but if it were, I should get rid of Hachikazuki before your father hears about it.'

The young master replied, 'I have been expecting this. I hear that even when someone shares the shade of a tree with another, or scoops out water from the same river, this is mapped out in a previous life. In ancient times, there were cases like mine, and when a man was disowned by his lord and was drowned in the deepest seas, he remained faithful to his love. So if I have come under my parents' suspicion and sink into Hell, where there is eternal suffering, it will mean nothing to me as long as we can remain husband and wife. Even if I am to die by my father's hand, I would not begrudge it. I cannot part from her. If my parents are unable to accept my marriage and wish to expel Hachikazuki and myself, I will live in a wild field or on a distant mountain with the girl I love and will never regret it.'

Then he left his quarters and entered the room where the firewood was stored.

For the past few days he had been trying not to attract attention, but after the nurse's visit, he remained all day with Hachikazuki. His elder brothers prevented him from entering the family sitting room, but he did not mind. He continued to visit Hachikazuki openly during the day and at night.

'Hachikazuki is a witch. I do not want to lose my son to her. What can be done, Renzei?' the mother asked the nurse.

'Usually His Lordship is unnecessarily shy and reserved, even in everyday matters,' Renzei replied. 'That is his nature, but as far as this girl is concerned, he shows no sign of restraint. Why not have a public beauty contest among the wives of all your sons? Hachikazuki will probably leave the house in shame.'

Taking up the suggestion, the mother had an announcement circulated: 'On the following day at a certain time, there will be a contest among the wives of their Lordships.'

Meanwhile, Saishō went to see Hachikazuki. 'They are trying to get rid of us by publicly announcing a wives' contest. What shall we do?' he asked. Then he wept.

With tears in her eyes, Hachikazuki replied, 'Why should I spoil your life? I will go away.'

'Without you,' Saishō said, 'I am unable to live. I will accompany you wherever you go.' Hachikazuki did not know what to do and wept.

Finally the day of the contest arrived. Saishō had decided to leave home with Hachikazuki. Just before the break of dawn, he put on unaccustomed straw sandals and tightened the strings. He was so sorry to be leaving home while his parents were still alive that his eyes dimmed with tears. How sad he was to take this step into the unknown without even seeing them.

'Let me go alone,' Hachikazuki said. 'If our love is genuine, we will meet again.'
 'It makes me sad to hear you say that,' he replied. 'I will follow you to the end of the earth.' He recited this poem:

<i>Kimi omou</i>	When I think of you,
<i>Kokoro no uchi wa</i>	Inside my heart I feel
<i>Wakikaeru</i>	A sense of wild pounding,
<i>Iwama no mizu ni</i>	As if a torrent of water
<i>Taguete mo miyo.</i>	Were dashing against a rocky shore.

Just as they were about to leave, Hachikazuki recited this verse:

<i>Waga omou</i>	And my love for you
<i>Kokoro no uchimo</i>	From the depths of my heart
<i>Wakikaeru</i>	Also rises up,
<i>Iwama no mizu o</i>	As if the rocky shores
<i>Miru ni tsukete mo.</i>	Were waiting for the waves to strike.

And then:

<i>Yoshi saraba</i>	How deeply we're in love!
<i>Nobe no kusa to mo</i>	Though I am not a blade of grass
<i>Nari mo sede</i>	Growing on the moors,
<i>Kimi o tsuyu to mo</i>	I wish that you were a drop of dew
<i>Tomo ni kienan.</i>	So we might vanish together.

Saishō replied:

<i>Michinobe no</i>	Although dewdrops cannot last
<i>Hagi no sueba no</i>	On the leaves of the clover
<i>Tsuyu hodo mo</i>	By the side of the road,
<i>Chigirite shiru zo</i>	Now that we've pledged our love
<i>Ware mo tamaran.</i>	Be assured I'll never leave you.

Although he had made up his mind, he found it so difficult to leave that he burst into tears. But they could not wait any longer, for it was almost dawn. Then, suddenly, just as they set off on their journey, weeping as they went, the bowl on Hachikazuki's head fell to the ground with a crash.

In astonishment Saishō just stared at the lady's face, which was as dazzling as the full moon coming out of the clouds. There was nothing with which to compare her beauty, or the brilliance of her hair. He was delighted, and picked up and examined the bowl. In the double basket which was fitted to it, he saw a golden ball and *sake* cup, a little silver *sake* jug, an orange tree with three oranges of placer gold, a silver *kempo no nashi*,⁷⁷ a set of ceremonial robes for a court lady, a carefully dyed crimson skirt, and many other precious things.

⁷⁷ けんぼの梨, *hovenia dulcis*, the berries of | from Mt Kempo 県圃 in China where super-
 which are edible; it was believed to have come | humans were said to have lived.

The lady thought that they must be divine gifts from Kannon in Hase, the goddess in whom her mother had put her trust. She wept with both joy and sorrow.

‘I am delighted at your good fortune,’ Saishō exclaimed. ‘Now we need not go.’ Then they began to prepare for the wives’ contest.

It was daybreak, and people began to stir. ‘How immodest of Hachikazuki to remain for such a distinguished occasion,’ they said one to another and laughed.

A messenger was sent to summon the contestants, and the wife of the eldest son appeared in the most elegant dress. She looked about twenty-two or twenty-three years old. As it was the middle of the ninth month, she wore layers of robes over a white under-robe and a dark red skirt, which trailed on the floor behind her, as did her long hair. She was radiantly beautiful. As presents for her parents-in-law, she brought ten large rolls⁷⁸ of Chinese twill and ten sets of wadded silk robes on a large tray.

The second son’s wife was about twenty years old, and her outstanding beauty was highlighted by her grace and nobility. Her hair just touched the ground, and her costume was a fine robe of raw silk underneath, and on top a wadded silk robe, which was decorated with gold and silver leaves. She trailed an embroidered soft-pink skirt. Her presents were thirty sets of wadded silk robes.

The wife of the third son looked about eighteen and was the most beautiful of all, even though her hair did not reach the ground. The moon and the flowers would have envied her. Her undergarment was a pink wadded silk robe, and covering that was one of Chinese twill. She brought thirty small rolls⁷⁹ of dyed silk for her parents-in-law. The three wives were almost equally splendid.

A worn-out straw mat was placed on the lowest-ranking seat for Hachikazuki. ‘Now that we have seen the three wives,’ the people said, ‘let us enjoy ourselves and watch miserable-looking Hachikazuki make her appearance.’ They quivered with excitement, like birds under the eaves tidying their feathers. The three wives also waited impatiently.

Then their father-in-law said regretfully, ‘I am sorry she did not go away, but must now be humiliated. Why have we done this? There was no need for this wives’ contest. It would have been better to pretend not to know the difference between fair and ugly, and to have let things be.’

A messenger was sent many times to urge Hachikazuki to make haste. ‘She is coming,’ Saishō said, and the crowd grew excited, expecting to laugh.

Hachikazuki’s entrance defied comparisons. Her face, which was covered by a fan, was as noble and as beautiful as the moon behind the clouds. Her person was as charming as the dewy blossom of a drooping cherry tree, shining in the sun of an early spring morning. Her eyebrows were delicate, and her gracefully hanging side locks were as glossy as the wings of autumn cicadas. Her expression would

⁷⁸ A large roll (*hiki* 疋) was about 24 yards in length.

⁷⁹ A small roll (*tan* 反) was about 12 yards long.

have been the envy of a cherry blossom in spring, or the moon in autumn. She looked about fifteen or sixteen years old. Her costume consisted of a glossed-silk robe underneath, and on top one of Chinese twill and robes of pink, purple, and other colors. She trailed a well-dyed dark red skirt. Her hair, shining like the plumes of a kingfisher, tossed as she walked. She appeared to be the incarnation of a goddess. The crowd was astonished and disappointed, while Saishō was pleased beyond measure.



Hachikazuki Sōshi, 1659

Diet Library

When the lady was about to sit on the seat prepared for her, the Middle-Captain said, 'We cannot seat a goddess incarnate there,' and he invited her to sit with her parents-in-law. She was so lovely that his wife had her sit on her left. The lady brought her father-in-law a golden *sake* cup on a silver tray, a golden orange tree with three oranges, ten taels of gold, thirty sets of robes of Chinese twill and woven wadded silk, ten small rolls of Chinese brocade, and fifty rolls of silk, all on a large tray. Her mother-in-law received a hundred small rolls of dyed cloth, a golden ball, and a branch of a silver *kempo no nashi*, all on a golden tray. The crowd was overwhelmed, as on every score—appearance, costume, and presents—the lady was far superior to the others.

The parents had thought that the wives of the three elder sons were beautiful, but next to the lady, they seemed like devils and infidels sitting before a Buddha.

'Let us have a closer look at her,' said the elder brothers. When they did so, her

beauty was such as to illuminate her entire surroundings. They were struck dumb with admiration and envied their brother, thinking that even Yang Kuei-fei and Madam Li were no match for her. Since they were only human, they would have loved to have spent a single night with such a beauty and kept precious the memory for the rest of their lives. Their father thought it no wonder that Saishō was willing to die for her.

Sake was brought in, and the mother-in-law drank first. Then she handed the cup to the lady, and they kept passing it between them. The other three wives became jealous and said to one another, 'One's looks have nothing to do with one's rank. Let us play music and have her play the *wagon*. Unless you have really mastered this instrument, it is impossible to play well. His Lordship Saishō is a fine player and may be able to teach her later, but he can surely not do so this evening. Let us begin.'

The wife of the eldest son played the *biwa*, the wife of the second son the *shō*, and their mother-in-law the hand drum. They all urged the lady to play the *wagon*.

But she replied, 'As I have never heard of such a thing before, I do not know how I can comply.' She declined. Observing this, Saishō longed to be able to take her place and play it.

The lady thought to herself, 'They believe me to be a humble girl and are trying to make me a laughingstock. When my mother was still alive, I used to play music all day long. I do so wish to play.'

'Let me try,' she said, and picking up the *wagon* beside her, she played three melodies. Saishō was filled with joy.

The other wives got together again and considered that although Saishō might teach her how to compose poems and write beautifully, he could not do so in the short time available. So they decided to let her write a verse, and then to make fun of her.

'Please look at this, my Lady,' they said. 'A wisteria flower is blossoming on a cherry branch. Here we can see spring and summer at the same time. In autumn, the best flower is the chrysanthemum. My Lady, please compose a poem about all this.'

'Oh, what a difficult thing you ask me to do,' the lady replied. 'My skills are limited to scooping up water with the waterwheel I use every morning and evening, something I learned recently while working in the bathhouse. I know nothing of making up verses. Please, you ladies do so first. I shall try after you.'

'Because you are a guest today, you try first,' the ladies urged her. Without further ado, she wrote this poem:

Haru wa hana
Natsu wa tachibana
Aki wa kiku
Izure no tsuyu ni
Oku mono zo uki.

Cherry blossoms in spring,
 Orange blossoms in summer,
 Chrysanthemum flowers in autumn—
 On which of these
 Are dewdrops the saddest?

Everyone marveled at her easy brushwork, which was reminiscent of the flowing strokes of Tōfū.⁸⁰ Looking at her accomplishment, they said, 'She must be the reincarnation of the ancient Lady Tamamo.⁸¹ This is alarming!'

Sake was brought in again. First, the father-in-law had some, and then passed the cup to the lady.

'Here is something to go with the *sake*,' he said. 'My land is said to be seven hundred *chō*,⁸² but it is actually two thousand three hundred *chō*. I grant one thousand to the lady and let Saishō have another thousand. The remaining three hundred are to be divided among my three other sons. Take a hundred each! If you are dissatisfied, I will not think of you as my sons.'

The three sons thought it most unreasonable, but because it was their father's command there was nothing they could do. They all agreed thenceforth to regard Saishō as the head of the family.

The lady also received twenty-four ladies-in-waiting to serve her, including Renzei the nurse, and she moved to the Bamboo Palace, where Saishō lived.

One day Saishō asked her, 'I cannot believe you to be an ordinary person; please tell me your name.'

She thought of telling him the truth, but considered how this might give her stepmother a bad name. She subtly changed the subject and talked about a variety of other things. Later, she carefully performed religious rites for the salvation of her dead mother.

As the years passed, she bore many sons. She was extremely happy, but she still longed for her father in the home she had left behind. She wished that he could see her children.

In the meantime at her father's house, the stepmother's stinginess had caused the servants to run away one by one, and the family had become quite poor.

No one would marry the stepmother's only daughter. Because he felt no love for his second wife, the father no longer cared for his wretched home, or indeed for anything else, and left it to devote himself to the practice of religion. When he reflected seriously, he viewed the past as follows: his late wife, grieved at not having had a child of her own, had made pilgrimages to Hase, and thanks to her many prayers there and to the grace of Kannon, she had given birth to a daughter. After the mother's passing, a strange and terrible object had attached itself to the poor girl, and her stepmother had not acted like a parent and had heaped many slanders upon her. Horror of horrors! Believing these slanders true, he had

⁸⁰ Ono no Tōfū (Michikaze) 小野道風, 894–966, was one of the three great calligraphers of Japan; he made important contributions to the development of the Japanese style of calligraphy.

⁸¹ 玉藻の前. According to *Tamamo Sōshi* 玉藻草紙, she was a witch who first manifested herself as the wife of Pan-tsu Wang 斑足王 of Central Asia, and then of the Emperor Yu of

Chou, when she called herself Pao-szu 褒姒. After bringing ruin to her husband and his country, she escaped to Japan and was loved by ex-Emperor Toba, who reigned 1107–22. When her true identity was revealed, she assumed the form of a fox and escaped, but was eventually killed.

⁸² One *chō* 町 was about 2.45 acres.

mercilessly driven her out. Since she was not a normal girl, she might be dwelling somewhere suffering who knows what fate. How cruel!

Then he made a pilgrimage to Kannon at Hase and offered a heartfelt prayer, 'If the Lady Hachikazuki is still alive, please bring her back to me.'

Saishō had gained the emperor's favor and was given three provinces, Yamato, Kawachi, and Iga. And so he made a thanksgiving pilgrimage to Hase in honor of Kannon. The members of his household, including his sons, were lavishly dressed and were conspicuous by their loud merriment in the temple.

The lady's father was chanting a prayer before Kannon. Saishō's retainers decided that the hall was too small to hold both them and this old man. 'You there, brother, move on!' they bellowed, and they drove him from the building. He stood looking at Saishō's sons, weeping profusely.

When those who noticed him asked, 'You, brother, what are you crying about?' he told them all about his family and added hesitatingly, 'Those young gentlemen resemble the daughter for whom I have been searching.'

Hearing this, the lady commanded, 'Call that holy man here!', and he was summoned to the veranda of the building. When she looked at him, even though he was aged and had a wizened face, she recognized him at once as her father, and, not abashed by the presence of the others, announced, 'I, none other, am that Hachikazuki of old!'

'Oh, is this a dream or is it real?' exclaimed her father. 'All thanks to the grace of Kannon!'

Then Saishō said, 'So this lady is from Katano in Kawachi, is she?'⁸³ No wonder she is not an ordinary girl.' He made her father the lord of Kawachi and his son the heir, and these two lived happily ever after. For himself, he built a palace in the province of Iga, where his descendants lived in great prosperity.

It is said that all this resulted from the divine grace of Kannon at Hase and that to the present day anyone who believes in Kannon shall receive unmistakable evidence of her beneficent powers. All who hear this story should pronounce the name of Kannon ten times: Homage to the greatly benevolent and supremely compassionate Bodhisattva Kannon!

<i>Tanomite mo</i>	How trustworthy you are,
<i>Nao kai ari ya</i>	Kannon, Goddess of Mercy.
<i>Kanzeon</i>	How assuring is your vow
<i>Nise anraku no</i>	To confer comfort and joy
<i>Chikai kiku ni mo.</i>	In this life and the next.

⁸³ The implication is that she is the daughter of the famous Governor of Bitchū, who lived in Katano in Kawachi.