THE HOMOSEXUAL THEME IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE FICTION
WITH
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF A REPRESENTATIVE TALE:
TORIBEYAMA MONOGATARI

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The Homosexual Theme in Medieval Japanese Fiction

Homosexuality is still a controversial moral-religious issue in modern American society. Alfred Kinsey states: "The very general occurrence of the homosexual in ancient Greece (Licht 1925, 1926, 1928, 1932), and its wide occurrence today in some cultures in which such activity is not as taboo as it is in our own, suggests (sic) that the capacity of an individual to respond erotically to any sort of stimulus, whether it is provided by another person of the same or of the opposite sex, is basic in the species." In my assumption, one culture in which homosexuality was not taboo, as it always has been in American society, is that of medieval Japan (approximately 1200-1600). Homosexual relationships as described in some pieces of medieval literature, particularly the short fiction of the Muromachi period (1340-1600), cannot necessarily be interpreted as an indication of the universal occurrence of homosexual activity in the real life of the general male population of medieval Japanese society. But looking into the literature of a given era does provide one way of ascertaining the general scope of sexual activities of members of that era's society and their conception of those practices. Therefore, I would like to discuss a representative sampling of medieval works containing a homosexual theme, notably those short pieces of Muromachi fiction traditionally characterized as chigo monogatari (lit., "acolyte tales"), along with a few other pieces of literature produced in an earlier era, to illustrate how the subject of homosexuality is treated.
The designation _chigo monogatari_ is defined by Ichiko Teiji as comprising eight stories that focus specifically on homosexual relationships between Buddhist priests and young acolytes. That is to say, in Ichiko's view (as well as in that of many other scholars),⁴ the term _chigo monogatari_ is used to indicate a sub-classification or even "sub-genre" of an amorphous body of short medieval prose works that ultimately were grouped together into a literary genre referred to as _otogi-zōshi_.⁵

The term _chigo_ is defined variously as: 1) infant; 2) child; 3) boys who were employed as menials by aristocrats, warriors or priests; 4) boys and girls who took part in certain shrine and temple rituals; 5) a boy who participated in homosexual activity.⁶ These definitions represent a summation of the modern understanding of the word _chigo_, but in the medieval age when Buddhism was in its fullest bloom, the term _chigo_ referred specifically to boys or youths who resided in temples. Some of them were essentially domestic, while others were the young sons of aristocrats or warriors often entrusted to the temples for their education. Upon completion of their education, they could choose between returning home or becoming priests. Large temples, therefore, accommodated numerous priests and a relatively large number of young boys and youths (i.e., _chigo_). In such an environment it would seem that homosexual relationships between priests and _chigo_ became prevalent,⁷ and the term _chigo_ took on a new meaning. Margaret Childs, in an article entitled "Chigo Monogatari: Love Stories or Buddhist Sermons?" (Monumenta Nipponica, XXXV. No. II), describes the _chigo_ as "youths involved in homosexual relationships with priests."⁸
Ichiko claims that there is no doubt that the chigo monogatari were written by priests and that they constitute a sub-variety of the religious tale (sōryō to shūkyō ni kansuru monô [tales concerning the priests and religion]), a major category of otogi-zōshi. The eight tales discussed by Ichiko are: Aki no yo no naga monogatari (lit., "A Long Tale for an Autumn Night," 1077); Gembu monogatari (A Tale of Illusion and Dreams, 1425-1485); Matsuho no Ura monogatari (The Tale of Matsuho no Ura, n.d.); Toribeyama monogatari (The Tale of Toribeyama, n.d.); Saga monogatari (The Tale of Saga, n.d.); Ben no sōshi (The Tale of [Acolyte] Ben, 1583); Hanamitsu (n.d.); Ashihiki (n.d.). Although the exact dates of most of these tales are unknown, they are presumed to have been written in the Muromachi period.

Ichiko views homosexual relationships as they are described in chigo monogatari in the following way: "Homosexuality is an unnatural act and perverted sexual deviation. Prohibition of sexual intercourse with women caused the priests to turn to their own sex as an outlet for sexual desire. Thus it is a particular situation in a particular environment that is the cause of this abnormal sexual behavior." Nonetheless, Ichiko seems to approve of a priest's gratifying his sexual desire per se and even believes in its necessity. His assertion also indicates that he assumes that if a woman is available without any restrictions (religious or otherwise), a man's first choice of sex object will invariably be a woman. By extension, he suggests that young acolytes were used because they were the only tacitly sanctioned available outlet for satisfying the sexual drive of the priests.
However, there is a fallacy in Ichiko's analysis in as much as he disregards man's propensity for going beyond mere sexual desire to the level of love. Ichiko's statement raises many questions. What scientific evidence does he use to verify his premise that homosexuality is inevitably the second choice for a man when there is no access to heterosexuality? Is it necessary for a man to gratify his sexual drive with no regard for love by merely submitting himself to the presumed second choice, and, in so doing, possibly to go so far as to exploit others? Whether homosexuality is the result of prenatally determined sexual orientation or simply a substitute for heterosexuality because of limited choice of object determined by specific social variables is a question worth asking. In my attempt to throw some light on this question as it applies to medieval Japan, I have found it helpful to examine some of the stories of the chigo monogatari variety and some other similar pieces of Japanese literature of the time.

According to Yoshizawa Yoshinori, the two masterpieces of the chigo monogatari "genre" are Aki no yo no naga monogatari and Toribeyama monogatari. The former presumably dates from the late fourteenth century and the latter from the middle of the Muromachi period. Margaret Childs indicates that Gemmu monogatari is also of "particular interest." The following is a brief outline of this tale as presented in her "Chigo Monogatari: Love Stories or Buddhist Sermons":

In Gemmu monogatari, Gemmu, a priest from Ōhara, north of Kyōto, falls in love with Hanamatsu, a boy of about fifteen who has come to the capital from Nikkō for a brief stay. After some time Hanamatsu returns to Mt. Nikkō. Gemmu undertakes the long journey to visit his lover, but
loses his way on the slopes of the mountain. Hanamatsu finds Gemmu and leads him to his temple, but disappears after a night of reminiscing. In the morning, Gemmu learns that Hanamatsu has been dead for seventeen days; having carried out a vendetta to avenge his father, who had died on the battlefield some years previously, Hanamatsu was slain by his victim’s son. Gemmu had passed the night with his spirit.

Gemm’s reaction to the trauma was to take up a life of religious devotion on Mt. Kōya. On the anniversary of Hanamatsu’s death, Gemmu meets a young priest in deep mourning, who he discovers to be the youth who slew Hanamatsu. This youth had renounced the world when, having killed Hanamatsu, saw that his victim was just a boy like himself. Thereafter Gemmu and the youth spent their days reciting the nembutsu together. A postscript explains that Hanamatsu was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Manju, who has thus succeeded in leading two people to religious awakening.19

Gemm monogatari deals with the subject of homosexual love between a priest and a youth, although it is obvious that this theme serves as background for the presentation of a religious issue—the transience of life and religious conversion. The story opens with a passage containing a Buddhistic message which echoes the opening passage of Heike monogatari (Tales of the Heike, 1218–1240)20 in its implication and poetic overtones: “The forty-eight beautiful aspects of the moon will be covered by the cloud of thirty-five nights. Flowers blooming, ignorant of the ten sins, in the sunshine of March will fall in the nine spring gales. Mortals will die and the prosperous will decline.”21 In spite of the didactic nature of the tale, the love relationship between the priest Gemmu and the boy, Hanamatsu, would seem to be essentially a spiritual homoerotic bond. There is no specific indication of physical consummation, which is not the case with the other three tales. In fact, disapproval of homosexuality is expressed in a passage which says that “the Buddha does not approve of homosexuality.”22 Nevertheless,
there is no indication in the story that the love shared by Hanamatsu and Gemmu is viewed with disapproval by other characters in the tale. Upon Gemmu's visit, Hanamatsu tells Gemmu, "My teacher said that he was looking forward to seeing you tomorrow."²³ This passage implies that it was proper for a boy to introduce his homosexual lover to his teacher, and further, it was expected that his teacher would welcome his disciple's lover with hospitality.

Although the tragic end of love in this case is caused by something other than the fact that the youth is involved in a homosexual relationship, the author tries to tie both together as cause and effect. A passage in the story suggests that life is fleeting. It also makes it very clear that the priest went astray from the moment of his meeting with Hanamatsu, and hence neglected to follow the Buddha's way. Hanamatsu's death is a manifestation of Buddha's will.²⁴ It seems, then, that Gemmu's retribution comes as a result of neglecting his wholehearted devotion to the Buddha rather than as a result of his being involved with love—in this case, love of a homosexual nature.

The philosophical theme of Gemmu monogatari—the transience of life—is emphasized in a scene in which the spirit of Hanamatsu incarnate appears and gives a flute to Gemmu. In the morning, Gemmu discovers that he has spent a night with Hanamatsu's spirit and in his hand he really holds the flute the spirit left behind. The message here, as Margaret Childs notes, is that, "Reality cannot be distinguished from illusion."²⁵ And the priest's being awakened from a trance suggests his awakening from secular life to the way of the Buddha to seek salvation. The closing passage addresses this teaching to the reader or audience:
"Anyone who has listened to this story should read a volume of scripture and pray for Hanamatsu's and Gemmu's souls. An old tale like this, though it may sound like fiction, is a means of leading people to an awakening of life's meaning (lit., "introduce the clear moon expelling the useless clouds"). Hanamatsu who 'fell in the storm' represents the transiency of life; a dream that ends with a bell at dawn represents a fleeting insubstantial life. Illness may fall upon those who unawares spend time in vain; it is too late to 'dig a well' after one comes face to face with death. Young or old, each one of you should wholeheartedly contemplate life and death, and by so doing, you shall work your way toward the next life, rather than spend this life for nothing."^{26}

The religious theme of this story has no direct relation to moral prohibitions against homosexuality at all; the storyline could have been (and is in other instances) constructed around some other common aspect of living. It is the message that is important, namely that the next life is the goal of this life. Homosexuality was used as a variant "setting" simply because it was a common (and very likely, acceptable, or at least tolerated) practice among the priesthood. Nowhere in this story (or in any of the others in the genre) is the practice of homosexuality per se a controversial issue or the focus of moral chastisement.

Ichiko, however, in his Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū (Studies in Medieval Fiction), claims that the priests of the Muromachi period, most of whom had "more education and greater intelligence" than the warriors, bore a sense of guilt for practicing homosexuality because they believed it to be irreligious and unnatural. Hence, they attempted to rationalize their discomfort by writing stories in which homosexual love functions as a catalyst for bringing about religious awakening.^{27}
This suggests that the protagonists, after experiencing the pain resulting from a tragic end of the homosexual love relationship, realized the transitory nature of life (i.e., the folly of devoting themselves to worldly entanglements), and thereafter thoroughly committed themselves to the Buddha's way. Ichiko here misses an essential point: Did a mentality (such as his own), which condemns homosexuality as "unnatural," exist in medieval Japan? It is my contention that it did not and therefore Ichiko errs in applying a modern stigmatized view of homosexuality to the chigo monogatari, and indeed to the culture of the time. If society approved of homosexuality (or even tolerated it), as the chigo monogatari would seem to imply, then there would have been no need to excuse or defend the practice.

In Japan, it was not until the early Edo period (1600-1868) that homosexuality began to be criticized by the government. Bullough, in his Sexuality in Society and History, states:

"in the past, even those cultures that accepted or tolerated other sexual behaviors were biased in favor of copulation between males and females, because it was necessary for the perpetuation of the family....Once an individual had performed his or her duty, other forms of sexuality were allowed, or even (sic) a few individuals were exempted from reproducing."

The major social-legal institution aimed at the production of "legitimate" progeny, in the main, is a patriarchal marriage system. In Japan, however, establishment of a patriarchal marriage system occurred much later than in Western societies. Takamura Itsu, a scholar of the
marriage system in Japan, discusses this phenomenon in her *Josei no rekishi* (History of Women) as follows:

In the middle of the Heian period, along with *tsumadoi kon* (duolocal [marriage], in which man and woman live separately, with the man visiting the woman but not living with her), the custom of a man's moving into a woman's residence (*mukotorikon*, or *uxorilocal [marriage]*, in which man and woman reside at the house of the woman's parents) also started. This custom still does not go beyond the framework of matriarchal marriage. Marital relationships of this kind were quite free. If a man ceased to love a woman, he no longer came to see her; and if a woman did not love a man, she could refuse him. Economic security was ensured by the family. Women did not lose their rights of inheritance until long after the clan system had collapsed. It took many centuries for the clan system to dissolve in Japan; thus, matriarchal marriage remained for a long time. Patriarchal marriage, in which a man's and woman's relationship is an economic unit, did not come into maturity very readily.  

It is extremely difficult to locate the precise transition period from matriarchy to generalized patriarchy, since this occurrence varied with class and region. Takamure says:

In many regional areas in Japan, the commuting marriage *kayoikon* remained until the Meiji period...... By and large, *kayoikon* or *mukotorikon* continued until the 14th century and *yometorikon* (virilocal [marriage], in which the man and wife take up residence near or at the house of the man's parents) started in the Muromachi period. This fact is of vital importance in understanding the economic production system in the lower level of society. However, Japanese historians have ignored this fact, which, I believe, is a big mistake. It is a characteristic of Japanese culture that there was a tremendous gap between the upper level and lower level cultures.  

After their research on the Japanese farmers' proprietorships in the medieval period, research scholars of The Association for the
Comprehensive Study of Women's History (Joseishi Sōgō Kenkyūkai) confirmed that Japanese women were economically independent. Combining their studies with a consolidation of marital mores as they appear in Konjaku monogatari, they asserted that

"in most cases men commuted to the women's residence in the early medieval period. The next stage was their taking up residence in the woman's residence and living with the woman's parents. The subsequent stage was that a man and woman established their own residence separate from that of the woman's parents, and thus formed a monogamous 'patriarchal-like' family, although the man and woman were economically independent of each other."\[33\]

Relationship of this kind are essentially matriarchal, not patriarchal. The Association for the Comprehensive Study of Women's History study reinforces Takamure's statement: "Patriarchy reached its full maturity during the period between the Muromachi and Edo periods."\[34\] The Muromachi period may be pictured, in general, as a period of transition from matriarchy to patriarchy even for the commoners. Until an official marriage system is rigidly established in a society, it would seem that social control over sexual behavior remains minimal. Apparently this is what happened in Japan.

During the Muromachi period, when the Japanese did not have a powerful centralized government, people's sexual activities were less controlled by politics than they were in later periods (i.e., the Edo and modern periods) and their concepts of sexuality presumably may have been quite flexible. Thus, individual desire in sexual activity was not entirely silenced, especially among members of the lower class in which matriarchal (marriage) lingered. However, in the Edo period, as the
Tokugawa government unified all of Japan and extended its ruling power over every class of people, individualism or flexibility in sexual activities also came under scrutiny. The Tokugawa government, obsessed with the goal of establishing permanent stability (a reaction to the preceding age) officially advocated the Confucian family system. Consequently, only patriarchal marriage was sanctioned officially and the grouping resulting from this institution was legally recognized as the minimal unit of society. Thus a state-formulated code of ethics governing sexual activity was instituted. Nonetheless, homosexuality, in spite of the government's attempts at its suppression, remained widespread.

_Nihon fūzoku shi_ (History of Japanese Mores and Customs), written in the Meiji period, describes homosexuality in the Muromachi period thusly:

"It was the Buddhist injunction against sexual contact with women that made the priests love boys. The aristocrats, in many cases, indulged in homosexuality as well as heterosexuality; therefore good-looking youths often found it easy to rise to high positions. Warriors, in their natural make-up, did not have a preference for the weak nature of females, and did not want to have life-long contracts with women because their profession might demand death at any time; therefore, they tended to practice homosexuality. The high-ranking warriors could take female prostitutes to the battlefields, but the low ranking warriors could not afford it; therefore, they satisfied each other by practicing homosexuality. Homosexual practice was extremely wide-spread in this period. The Shogun Yoshimitsu loved boys; many good-looking boys were employed by him. From that time, every shogun practiced sodomy and many feudal lords made it a custom to have a good-looking boy as one of his retainers. In the warring period, this ethos became even more pronounced. As for the affection homosexual pairings engendered, the bond of loyalty was very strong and their life-long pledges of love were even deeper than those of real brothers."
Disregarding the author's "mythological" rationalization of why homosexuality was practiced by aristocrat, warrior, and priest alike, the fact remains that male homosexuality appears to have been an acceptable practice at the time.

What was the attitude of the commoners, however, who were not subject to "a particular situation?" Okami Masao states in his Nihon bungaku no rekishi (History of Japanese Literature): "Sexual love is not the exclusive property of male and female, but it is for man and man as well: homosexual love for boys was prevalent at this time (the Muromachi period) among the common people." The Kanginshū (An Anthology of Songs of Leisure, comp. 1518), presumably compiled by a priest reflects the commoner's mentality of the time since it contains a large sampling of kouta, or "popular songs." Many of these songs, including the following, clearly reflect the people's attitude toward homosexuality:

However hard
I may try to sail,
I don't have the strength
To sail from the coast,
A pleasure youth of Awa is calling me.

I came from Tsuruha of Sanuki,
I slept with a boy of pleasure in Awa.
On my belly, on my legs,
I feel so relaxed,
Who cares about Tsuruha!

"It is noteworthy that these songs express admiration for homosexuals," says Okami Masao. Awa was the home base of the kugutsu, itinerant entertainers who earned their living as puppeteers, magicians and
prostitutes on the coast of Shikoku Island and was popular for male and female prostitution. The first song implies a fisherman or sailor's being tempted by a male prostitute when passing by the coast of Awa and the second song is an open and direct expression of appreciation of the sensuous pleasure provided by a youth. Neither song implies the slightest antipathy for homosexual encounters.

A much earlier work in which one can find an indication of the outlook of commoners of an earlier era is Konjaku monogatari⁴⁵ (Tales of Ancient and Modern Times, after 1120). Konjaku monogatari, a collection of folklore, legends, anecdotes, and tales (both Buddhist and secular), contains several stories with a homosexual theme. One of these concerns a priest who is rewarded by Bishamon⁴⁶ for practicing homosexuality. A priest who has what he assumes is a beautiful homosexual partner is envied by all the other priests who, nonetheless, congratulated him on his good fortune. When he discovers that his beautiful boy is really a girl disguised as a boy, however, he finds himself in trouble. Since he does not want to give her up, he keeps his dilemma secret and continues their relationship. The girl eventually tells the priest that she is pregnant. In considerable distress, the priest hides her in a secluded room so that she might deliver the baby in secret. On the day of delivery he goes to the room and discovers that the girl has disappeared, leaving the baby wrapped in her clothes. Under the clothes he finds a lump of gold. The tale ends with a message that the gold is a reward for him from Bishamon.⁴⁷ The stories in Konjaku monogatari are essentially folktales which were passed down orally from one generation to the next. Many of the accounts, therefore, reflect people's outlook
and desires to some extent, although most of the stories are didactic to varying degrees, thus betraying the fact that they were probably compiled by a priest. This tale "A Chigo Who Begot Gold by the Will of Bishamon" (Bishamon no tasuke ni yorite kin o umashime ben o uru koto) expresses people's evaluation of the priest for his violation of the Buddhist injunction against sexual contact with women and protecting a pregnant woman. At the same time, it ridicules sexual inhibition and indicates an apparent popular approval of homosexuality as well.

Honda Tatsujirō in his Isejšu Nihonshi (Japanese History from a Different Point of View) also discusses homosexuality in his chapter "The Origin of Transvestism in Japan:"

"From the late Heian period it was a normal practice that youths dress themselves in ladies' clothing and entertain the aristocrats at a banquet with dancing; the good-looking boys among them were invited to their beds. After the Kamakura period, as homosexuality was coming to be recognized as normal practice among people, the fashion of cross-dressing between sexes also came to be prevalent. As such a fashion was generally admired for its unique beauty, its popularity was high enough to stand above that of beautiful women and good-looking youths."

It would seem, then, that male homosexuality, which apparently was a relatively common occurrence even among the aristocracy of Heian Japan, continued to flourish without stigma up through the medieval period, until it ultimately became something of a convention, particularly (but not exclusively) among many members of the Buddhist priesthood and the samurai. My analysis of chigo monogatari other than those I have already mentioned supports this view. Consider the following paraphrase of Ashihiki, for example:
I. Some time ago, there was a Confucian student who served in the reigns of two emperors. Since he was the last of his family, the only thing on which he could rely was his ancestors' souls. As he did not neglect his constant and diligent studying, he was renowned for his knowledge. Having no property and no time to worry about himself because of his duties and because he encountered nothing but trouble, he was gradually getting tired of the school of Confucianism; soon he became interested in the study of Buddhism. He heard about the Master who was a great scholar, with many years of learning to his credit. The Master also heard about Jijū. At their first meeting, the Master was very pleased with Jijū because of his excellent disposition. The Master accepted Jijū and made him a novice priest. He was called Jijū Lord Genji. Following his master's advice, he devoted himself single-mindedly to his learning; therefore, the Master never regretted having accepted Jijū as a disciple. One day Jijū went to Shirakawa to see someone. There he heard the beautiful sound of a biwa coming from somewhere; he followed the sound and came to a neat attractive inn. As he stood enchanted with the music, a boy of about thirteen years of age, wondering who he might be, came out of the house. Jijū inopportune asked the boy who was playing the biwa and found out that it was a son of Minbu no Kyō Tokugyo. When Jijū asked the boy more about the player, the boy reluctantly answered that the young lord was about fourteen or fifteen years of age and that he was a student of Sōzu of Tōn' in temple. The boy then slammed the door on Jijū. Jijū went back the next day and found a youth standing on the terrace of the inn. The youth was so beautiful that Jijū could not take his eyes off him. Artlessly he stepped out to speak to the youth. The youth was startled; he blushed and hid himself behind the screen. Jijū found himself in an embarrassing situation. He realized he had to leave the inn. He started on his way home, but the youth's image did not leave him, and he was infatuated with him. His frustration from unfulfilled passion was so unbearable that Jijū went back to the inn again. Jijū finally had a chance to speak to the youth. They enjoyed the evening together appreciating the beautiful moon and playing music. They continued meeting and got deeply involved with each other. The youth's father, although he was first suspicious of Jijū's character, approved of their relationship once he found out that Jijū was a good person. However, Jijū had to go back to the temple. The Master realized Jijū was in love and permitted him to go back to see the youth. Jijū hurried to Shirakawa only to find that the youth had left the inn.
II. The youth could not forget Jijū and was infatuated with him. Following his father's advice, the youth went back to his temple, Tōnan'in. But he could not prevent himself from going out to search for Jijū. The youth went to the inn in Shirakawa where he had stayed before. A servant boy told the youth about Jijū's visit. The youth then went up to Mt. Hiei and found Jijū. They both cried with happiness and spent the night together. The Master, noticing some change in Jijū, questioned him. Finding out about Jijū's happy reunion with the youth, the Master blessed him and asked him to introduce the boy. The Master treated the young man with hospitality, as did everybody else in the temple.

III. At the Tōnan'in temple, the youth's disappearance created an uproar. His father, being informed of this, knew what had happened. The father sent the youth's valet to Mt. Hiei for Jijū. The young people in the temple were upset about this and claimed that they did not want to let the youth go back. However, his father begged Jijū to send his son home, promising that Jijū would have another chance to meet him. The Master understood that to refuse the request of Tokugyō, the Minister of Popular Affairs, might cause trouble in the future; therefore, he advised Jijū to send the youth back home, suggesting that they see each other in the future. Jijū decided to take the youth to his father and ask his father's consent for their future reunion. The Master had to persuade the other people not to interfere with the decision. The youth's father Tokugyō was delighted to see them and expressed his appreciation for Jijū's understanding; he also apologized for his blind love for his son and his excessive concern for his welfare. This made Jijū feel guilty for falling in love with the man's son, but he was most reluctant to reveal this. It did not take too long before Tokugyō was convinced of Jijū's character and felt that it was reasonable that his son had fallen in love with him. Jijū won Tokugyō's consent to send the youth to his temple on Mt. Hiei. The youth rejoiced at this decision. Tōnan'in temple was ready to welcome the young Lord of the Minister of Popular Affairs upon his return, but his father kept his promise to Jijū and did not send his son to Tōnan'in. The natural mother of the young Lord had long been deceased, and Tokugyō made one of his ladies-in-waiting his wife. His new wife was jealous of her step-son's happiness, so she cut off his hair down to its roots while he was asleep. The next morning Tokugyō and the young lord cried over the tragic incident, but it was too late. The young Lord realized that his wish to go to Mt. Hiei to join Jijū was not going to be fulfilled. He was overwhelmed by grief and disappointed with his future. He set off aimlessly. He met a hermit and followed him. The people on Mt. Hiei, not knowing the situation, sent priests and acolytes for the young Lord. Tokugyō, reading Jijū's letter,
could not do anything but cry. Jijū, learning of the circumstances, lost his mind and confined himself to his bed. Tokugūō secluded himself in overwhelming sadness. Since the household responsibilities were left exclusively to his wife, she had her daughter marry a monk and secretly plotted with him so that he would manage the property after her husband was dead. The people in the household all worried about their future security. The Master worried about Jijū's wasting away in love-sickness and looked for the best doctor in the country. Only to comfort the Master, Jijū saw a doctor, who was an eminent hermit since he knew a secret remedy for any ailment. The hermit's austere looks reflected the effect of practice of severe disciplines. He was accompanied by a young disciple. The disciple was the young Lord of Nara. Jijū and the young Lord could not do anything but cry. The young Lord stayed and the Master blessed their reunion.

IV. Three years later, the young Lord decided to go home to see his father. Jijū and the young Lord arrived in Nara, only to find that Tokugūō was out of town. Tokugūō's wife and her son-in-law attempted to murder the young Lord when they learned of his return. Tokugūō's people in the household fought against Tokugūō's wife and her people. Jijū killed Tokugūō's son-in-law in the battle.

V. Tokugūō, learning of the cause of the riot, expelled his wife and her daughter. When Jijū tried to return to his temple with the young Lord, Tokugūō asked Jijū not to take him along, for he himself was nearing death. Although he expressed appreciation of his son's relationship with Jijū many times over, Tokugūō explained to Jijū that he had nobody but his son to look after him and his property. Jijū could not refuse Tokugūō's desperate request and parted from the young Lord in tears. The young Lord returned to Tōnan'in. Sōzu, who was on his death bed, was extremely pleased to have him back. Sōzu, not having a proper disciple to inherit the temple, left it in the young Lord's care. Jijū studied assiduously and achieved a high rank, and the Master also achieved the rank of Sōzu before he died. Jijū's father forgave Jijū for embracing Buddhism and renouncing Confucianism against his will. With his last words, he instructed his son, emphasizing that man's accomplishment lies in self-perfection, not in worldly success. Jijū contemplated his father's last words. After he performed the ritual commemorating the first anniversary of his father's death, he decided to seclude himself in Ōhara, feeling a certain inspiration, thereby, to seek further enlightenment. Many years later, the young Lord, who had attained the rank of Sōzu, came to visit Jijū. Jijū died peacefully and happily in the presence of the young Lord.
Hence we see another example of the chigo monogatari genre in which no condemnation of homosexuality is apparent. On the contrary, it is approved of by all of the subordinate characters in the tale (as is the case in Aki no yo no naga monogatari and Toribeyama monogatari, discussed subsequently). In Ashihiki, as we have seen, the young Lord's father expresses his appreciation for his son's homosexual relationship with Jijū; his initial sceptical attitude toward their relationship is due to his initial suspicion of Jijū's character, and not to his antipathy for homosexuality. He even feels guilty for causing the separation of the lovers. Jijū's teacher, the Master, and all the young acolytes in his temple wishes them happiness in their relationship and actively support its continuation as is evident from the following passage:

Jijū thought he could no longer keep his affair secret and therefore talked to the Master about it candidly. The Master said, "I never dreamed this could happen to you. I'm so glad it did." "Please let me see the youth," he insisted, "even though he may feel like covering his eyes as he looks at my ugly old face."....The youth appeared tired because of his long journey, but still he seemed so elegant, sweet, and helpless. The Master treated the youth hospitably. Others in the area heard about the youth and praised the Master for his hospitality. They gathered around the youth to comfort him, and all spent ten pleasant days together playing music, reciting poems, and expressing their sincere friendship for one another.

Toribeyama monogatari, unlike Ashihiki, is a tragedy, but love sickness and not homosexuality per se is the cause of the death of the hero's young lover. There is no tragic conflict between the personal social lives of the main characters. The attendant reproaches his young Lord for concealing his love for Minbu: "It is not something you have to hide like this. Because you are so shy, you have made yourself
ill."\textsuperscript{60} The attendant then explains to his young Lord's parents that their son is suffering from love-sickness, and therefore is wasting away out of longing for his homosexual lover, Minbu. The parents answer seriously, "What is he so ashamed of that he feels compelled to hide his feelings? How foolish he is! If that is what he wants, we will be happy to have his friend with us."\textsuperscript{61} Subsequently, the parents send the attendant to the East to look for Minbu.

In both Gemmu monogatari and Aki no yo no naga monogatari, there is no obvious trace of disapproval of homosexuality: nor is there any indication at all that the protagonist in each case feels guilt as a result of his homosexual longing. In each of the four stories under discussion, the protagonist falls in love with a youth at first sight and woos him with a love poem. Initially the youth spurns his advances out of shyness, but ultimately accepts him. The lovers spend a night together, exchanging vows of eternal love. If they cannot consummate their passion, passion consumes (and sometimes destroys) them. This sequence of events in homosexual love relationships is no different from that which transpires in traditional (i.e., "classical") heterosexual relationships. In fact, it is a standard narrative sequence in the love-romances that comprise much of Heian fiction, and also many of the medieval love stories (one of the major rubrics [i.e., \textit{renai-mono}] of \textit{otogi-zōshi}, be they heterosexual or homosexual in thrust) that characteristically look wistfully back to this earlier era.

There would seem to be little question that extant literary works of the Heian period reflect what actually transpired among the aristocracy of the time. In those days, there was no concept of "premarital
sex," "unwed mother," or "'unsold' spinster,"—terms with which the modern Japanese assess women's behavior and/or qualities, based, of course, on their marketability for marriage. All it took to consummate love in the Heian period was a beautiful moon and passion. That people (at least members of the aristocracy in the Heian period) apparently accepted the consummation of heterosexual love as natural, without necessarily viewing it in terms of marriage, may well have influenced their view of homosexual love also so that it too was considered quite acceptable. Strangely enough, however, with the possible exception of a brief episode in *The Tale of Genji* and in *Ise monogatari* the homosexual theme does not occur in extant examples of Heian fiction. But it does occur in several personal diaries written in Chinese by many gentlemen of the court. Approval of the various expressions of human love, of course, is completely dependent on social context. Hence, acceptance of the homosexual alternative, too, is not based on a consideration of its biological naturalness or unnaturalness but on social sanctions, which, of course, in turn may be and often are governed by religious dogma. It would appear that there is no essential difference in the nature of love in heterosexuality and homosexuality. The intrinsic value of romantic love, if indeed there can be any valid objective value to it, should be the same for either heterosexuality or homosexuality.

Ichiko's analysis of homosexuality, alas, reflects a common prejudice molded by later social variables (particularly the influence of Western [Judeo-Christian] ideas in this area) in modern (i.e., post-Edo) Japanese culture. His assumption that "the priest must have had a sense
of guilt because of the unnatural and unethical perverted behavior of homosexuality [italics mine]" is not supported by any internal evidence in the chigo monogatari.

What was considered undesirable, however, was an exaggeration of passion and excessive indulgence in it. This Buddhist enjoiner is characteristic of many of the love romances in the otogi-zōshi genre, regardless of whether the plot involves a heterosexual or homosexual liaison. Homosexuality itself, however, is never singled out for disapprobation or ridicule. The four chigo monogatari on which my discussion is focused stress spiritually heightened love as well as intense passion, but what Ichiko calls "dark sexual impulse" does not appear. Ichiko's statement that homosexuality "...because of its unnaturalness, necessarily lends itself to a tragic ending," is also questionable. He explains that "marriage is the happy ending of love, whereas, homosexuals must separate from each other before death separates them." His concept of "the happy ending of love" cannot necessarily be applied to heterosexual love relationships of the medieval Japanese. Before the marriage system was completely standardized and, consequently, before the modern concept of the family as a social unit had permeated the entire society, as I mentioned earlier, it is questionable whether marriage (patriarchal) was even an issue in heterosexual love. Whenever legal patriarchal marriage took place in the Muromachi period, it was, in most cases, not the goal of love at all but rather it served purposes that were essentially utilitarian. The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous
marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male,"^70 says Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This statement holds true for the Japanese patriarchal marriage system also. If my assumption that Ichiko, when he speaks of "marriage" is referring to patriarchal marriage is correct, it would be unrealistic to tie heterosexual love in with patriarchal marriage and then call this "a happy ending." Love is meaningful in and of itself, regardless of whether it finds expression in homosexual or heterosexual relationships. Ichiko's syllogism that homosexuals could not marry, whereas heterosexuals could, and therefore homosexual love necessarily ended in tragedy, which, in turn, triggered in the surviving partner (usually the older-i.e., "the priest") an awakening to an understanding of life is an extremely naive and shallow argument. It is true that among the *otogi-zōshi* love stories having a heterosexual theme there are some that depict the heroine marrying a rich man and living together happily ever after.^71 This is one of the many unrealistic elements that characterize the *otogi-zōshi* genre in general. Hence, it is not surprising that the *otogi-zōshi* genre is usually described as being "fairy-tale-like fiction."^72 Ichiko errs, however, when he attempts to transfer what he calls the "happy ending of love" from fairy tales to real life.

Tragedy, as I pointed out previously, when it occurs in the *chigo* stories under discussion, is not caused by homosexuality. *Ashihiki*, in fact, is not a tragedy at all. In *Gemmu monogatari*, the protagonist's loss of his lover is caused by a vendetta in which his lover was involved. In *Aki no yo no naga monogatari*, the tragedy unfolds when
goblins kidnap the youth, an event which triggers a battle between the two great temples. In medieval Japan (as well as in earlier eras), after Buddhism reached its greatest influence, many monks often misused their power. The monks of Mt. Hiei were especially notorious for militancy; bands of armed monks often terrorized the capital with their collective power. The protagonist in *Aki no yo no naga monogatari*, Master Keikai of Mt. Hiei, takes a lead in the battle against the temple Mitsui, even though his lover serves there. Keikai does this because he feels that

"since he (Keikai) was the cause of this calamity, he should lead an assault so that at least his name would survive....Keikai shouted angrily, 'This little ditch should be filled up with the dead by now. Is there any reason not to storm the tower? Those of you who care not for your lives, follow me and witness Keikai's daring exploit!'"

This sequence compels Keikai's own lover to commit suicide, a tragic turn of events that triggers in Keikai a spiritual awakening—an awareness of the transience of life.

In *Toribeyama monogatari*, the young lover of the protagonist Minbu wastes away as a result of his longing for Minbu. Eventually he dies, and Minbu, stricken with grief and a sense of profound loss, soon decides to renounce worldly attachments and become a recluse. The story ends with the words "How transient life is!"

The transience of life is the major theme of all four stories. This is the principal Buddhist message the stories are intended to convey. The priest's atonement for "committing the sin of homosexual practices" as Ichiko describes it (and their subsequent enlightenment)
is not the central idea. As I have said previously, there is no cause and effect relation between tragedy and homosexuality in these works. Nor is there any inevitable relation between the tragic end of homosexual love and the transience of life; the connection of the two is an artificial contrivance for the purpose of reaching the conclusion that life is transient. The concept of the transience of life is a traditional Japanese view of life which the Japanese tend to perceive in any phenomenon in the universe. Falling leaves, for example, or the death of a hero can serve as an immediate reminder of the transitory nature of human existence. The sudden death of a loved one, as occurs in Gemmu monogatari and Aki no yo no naga monogatari, however, obviously drives this message home with even greater poignancy. So pervading was this idea in medieval Japan that it affected both high and low alike.78

In discussing the development of this concept of transience Margaret Childs says: "A bittersweet sense of mono no aware (pathos) in Heian love tales has given way to the more powerful, tragic concept of transience."79 Heian literature provides many examples which depict mono no aware, the sensibility of the ancient Japanese in which, upon perceiving mutations in nature, they intuitively felt sadness over their powerlessness against it, and yet in submitting to it found beauty there.

Later intellectual interpretations, however, came to be added to this original view of life through the influence of Buddhism.80 The Buddhist message that this life is a temporary residence for man and the next life is the true life gave rise to the idea of the futility of
being controlled by worldly desires, the realization of which is an awakening to life—i.e., to an awareness of the transiency of life. The social milieu of the time was conducive to the infusion of this pessimistic view of life into the original Japanese sensibility.

The Muromachi period was politically a most unstable time. Power in Japan was divided among a number of great barons, over whom the Ashikaga shoguns exercised a tenuous authority. The gradual collapse of the Ashikaga government brought about a disintegration of law and a disruption of society—i.e., anarchy. Warfare in one region or another continued with very little pause throughout the fifteenth and much of the sixteenth centuries. During the Sengoku period (1482-1558) especially, people were living with a fear of imminent death. It is understandable that their awareness of the pathos and beauty of life (originally mono no aware) came to be intensified by pessimism, which in turn led to acceptance of the idea of the transiency of existence, long since a central view of Buddhism.

A devastating age like the Muromachi period, therefore, was an ideal time for the priests to influence the masses as never before. The people, deprived of security, were desperately receptive to any sort of power that would provide them with some sense of comfort. The tales that comprise the otogi-zōshi genre may have served as one of the useful media for priests to take their teachings to the people. According to Barbara Ruch, many retired monks were itinerant story tellers who made their living by entertaining and instructing the masses using the subject matter of the otogi-zōshi. Many priests, particularly those of the Pure Land sect traveled about preaching the Buddhist gospel.
Known as sekkyōshi (sermonizing priest) they too used entertaining stories and even humorous anecdotes to hold the attention of their audience as they conveyed their religious message. Anrakuan Sakuden (1554-1642), a well-known prelate of the period, is a case in point. He compiled a work he called Seisuishō (Laughs to Keep One Awake), a collection of some one thousand stories, jokes, and anecdotes, many of which he had apparently used during the period he spent as a sekkyōshi. Many of these stories contain a homosexual theme. Two of Sakuden’s chapters, in fact, are devoted to stories concerned with homosexual practices: Chigo no uwasu (Stories about the Acolytes) and Nyakudō shirazu (Those Unaware of Homosexuality). 84

As I mentioned previously, homosexuality per se has no more relation to Buddhistic enlightenment than does heterosexuality: when homosexual love is replaced by heterosexual love in works of this kind, no change necessarily occurs in the literary theme or in the message carried. 85 A case in point is Hananoen monogatari (lit., "The Tale of Relation of Flowers"), a work in the kana-zōshi 86 genre created in 1654. In this work, the plot is similar to that of Toribeyama monogatari, but the homosexual theme is replaced by its heterosexual counterpart. 87 In discussing this phenomenon, Yoshizawa Yoshinori concurs with Fujioka who states: "The fact that homosexual love was modified to heterosexual love [in the story] is evidence of the fact that homosexual practices were disappearing in the early Edo period." 88 This statement would seem to be a gross misrepresentation of the facts. A government injunction prohibiting the wakashū ("young men’s") kabuki, 89 in fact, was issued in 1626 because the shogunate felt that plays concerned with
homosexuality were detrimental to public morality. The young male actors, particularly those who played the female roles (onnagata) exploited sexuality on stage and were thereby charged with eroticism. They also lived out their professional roles in their private lives; many of them were prostitutes as well as actors, and members of the samurai class were very often their customers. As early as 1611, in fact, the government authorities, disturbed by the increasingly common development of intimate relationships between the samurai and young actor-prostitutes, enacted what was called Wakashū gurai teishi (An Order to Prohibit Indulgence in Wakashū) directed toward the samurai residing in Edo. In spite of government injunctions, homosexuality was extensively practiced not only by actors, samurai, and priests, but also by certain members of all classes of people in the Edo period. This is evident even from a casual examination of an extensive variety of literature concerned with homosexuality (not all of which is fiction) that was produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These works fall mainly into three categories: 1) homosexual romances; 2) essays or fiction in the form of debates on the merits of homosexual love versus heterosexual love; 3) guidebooks for the wakashū, or youths engaged in homosexual prostitution. In particular, the books written to teach the wakashū proper conduct in their affairs are especially revealing.

Shin'yūki (lit., "Record of Soulmates," 1643), Saiseiki (lit., "A Record of Promoting Love," 1657), Nanshoku masukagami (lit., "The Mirror of Clarity in Homosexuality," 1687) all aim at inculcating proper manners and conduct which the wakashū were expected to follow.
Shin'yūki was even revised and published under the title Šudō monogatari (lit., "The Story of the Code of Homosexuals") in 1661. Denpu monogatari (lit., "The Tale of a Farmer," 1637), one of the chapters in Saikaku okimiyage (lit., "Saikaku's Legacy," 1693), Keijō kintanki (lit., "Prohibited Love Destroys a Castle," 1631), and Keijō fūryūsugi sakazuki (lit., "Destruction of a Castle, the Beautiful Cider Tree and Sake Cup," 1623-1642) focus on the question of which sex is preferable as a sex object. Mokuzu monogatari (lit., "The Tale of Sesweed," 1641), Fūryū sagakōyō (lit., "The Beautiful Maple Tree of Saga," 1683) and Kōshoku Edomurasaki (lit., "Amorous Edo Lavender," 1685) deal with homosexual romance. Saikaku strongly supports homosexuality in his Nanshoku ōkagami (The Great Mirror of Manly Love, 1687), and he consistently deals with homosexual topics in many of his works: Budo denrai (The Chronicle of the Code of Warriors, 1687), Pukkoro suzuri (lit., "A Valuable Inkstand," 1687), Buke giri monogatari (The Bond of Samurai Honor, 1688), Kōshoku ichidai otoko (The Tale of an Amorous Man, 1682), Kōshoku ichidai onna (The Tale of an Amorous Woman, 1686) and Saikaku zokutsurezure (lit., "Saikaku and Secular Leisure," 1695). Of the large number of hyōbanki, or "evaluation books," that were published between 1656 and 1703, at least one-hundred-and-one were devoted to evaluations of actors alone. Nanshoku bunken shoshi (Bibliography of Reference Works on Homosexuality) indicates that the oldest work of Japanese literature containing a homosexual topic or theme is Ise monogatari (Tales of Ise, 951). The work also lists one hundred other pertinent works that were produced in the classical and medieval periods, and introduces six hundred references on the subject (exclusive of
the _hyōbanki_ mentioned above) published in the Edo period. It records 1894 as the date of publication of the last work of fiction on homosexuality (Chizome zakura [Cherry Blossom Stained with Blood] by Emi Suin [n.d.]) and indicates that the subsequently published works consist only of critical essays and non-literary research materials on homosexuality. About four hundred works mentioning homosexuality have been published in the modern period (These are essentially works concerned with abnormal psychology, history of customs, and the like). From the end of the nineteenth century until very recently homosexuality ceased to be a theme in Japanese literature. This may be due in part to the censorship which was established in the Meiji era and lasted until the end of World War II.

In the Meiji period, the Japanese were suddenly exposed to Western culture, and in the process their economic system was incorporated into that of the industrialized Western nations. This fact created an enormous impact on the sensibilities of the Japanese who had long felt that they were subservient to nature. The drastic change in the economic system (from an agricultural to industrial one) along with the influx of the Christian view of sexuality from the West refashioned the Japanese life-style. The entire nation felt its forceful influence, which became so pervasive that even the traditional Japanese role of nature began to erode. The Japanese attitude toward homosexuality, too, could not escape the impact of new ideas and new views. Imperialism rising on the wave of nationalism which aimed at the expansion of the Japanese race across all Asia led the government to suppress nonprocreative sexual activities including birth control. This drove homosexual
practices and their expression in literature underground until the appearance of Mishima Yukio's *Kamen no kokuha* (Confessions of a Mask, published in 1949). The modern Japanese mentality, in which religious regard for natural phenomenon (the indigenous philosophy), and Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity (foreign philosophies) are uniquely interlaced and fused, generally stigmatizes homosexuality.

As we have seen, many literary sources provide evidence that homosexuality did not meet with disapproval in medieval Japan or even in earlier eras. On the contrary, it was apparently widely practiced by priests, warriors and even commoners. Whether homosexuality is a variant form of sexual desire and expression determined by prenatal biological factors (and hence "natural"); the result of early post-natal environmental influences; or the result of willful choice in certain situations (i.e., either as a substitute for unavailable heterosexual outlets or simply as a personal preference) in accordance with the Kinsey theory of innate bisexuality (or even all of these), remains an open-ended question. Nonetheless, it may be concluded that if a society accepts homosexuality, it cannot be regarded, to use Ichiko's words, as "perverted sexual deviation" or "abnormal behavior." The moral assessment attached to homosexuality in any given society would seem to be a variable that is determined by the dominant ideology of its culture as it exists in different periods in history. It is not, as the medieval Japanese experience demonstrates, something inherent in homosexuality itself, which, like heterosexuality, is amoral.
NOTES

1 Although the word "homosexuality" technically includes lesbianism, in this study it (as well as the word "homosexual") refers exclusively to relationships and/or sexual activity between males.

2 Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Co., 1948), p. 660. Bullough points out that in ancient Greece, "in addition to their acceptance of homosexuality, pederasty was institutionalized within the educational system. . . . Education, after the primary grades, implied an intimate relationship, a personal union between a young man and an elder who was at once his model, guide, and initiator—a relationship on which the fire of passion burned. The admiration of the younger partner for the older and the need and desire of the older to gain the admiration and affection of the younger were believed to be the stimulus for the best type of education. . . . The relationship between the adult and the adolescent boy was maintained by daily association, personal contact and a sharing in more and less common life, and the gradual initiation of the younger into the social activities of the older men. . . . In this education, the family was more or less ignored. The mother's duty was to look after the babies and supervise the training of girls, but boys were, at age seven, removed from her hand. . . . Fathers paid little attention to their own male children, but instead left their upbringing to an adult male whose relationship as lover of the son was a 'union far closer' than what bound parents to children. Public opinion, and in some cases even the law, held the lover morally responsible for the development of his beloved. Pederasty was considered the most beautiful, the most perfect form of education." See Vern L. Bullough, Sexual Variance in Society and History (New York, London, Sydney and Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1976), pp. 108-109.

3 Concerning sexual taboos in modern American society, Kinsey further states: "The church, however, exerts a wider influence on even non-devout individuals, by way of the influence which it has had throughout the centuries upon the development of the sexual mores of our Western European-American culture. . . . No social level accepts the whole of the original Judaic-Christian code, but each level derives its taboos from some part of the same basic religious philosophy. Whether sexual acts are evaluated in terms of what is right or wrong, . . . or of what is natural or unnatural, . . . the Hebraic and Christian concept of the reproductive function of sex lies back of both interpretations." Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, pp. 486-487.

John Boswell points this out in his Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: "The belief that the hostility of the Christian Scriptures to homosexuality caused Western society to turn against it should not require any elaborate refutation. . . . In most modern Western cultures prior to the mid-twentieth century one could not publish homosexual poetry of any sort without danger of prosecution. . . . Until
very recently only the tiniest percentage of gay people have been willing to identify themselves publicly, and such persons, given the reactions they could reasonably expect, must have been atypical." (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago, 1980), pp. 7-23.

Akiyama Ken, Okubo Tadashi, Kubota Jun, Tsutsumi Seiji, and Miyoshi Yukio all treat chigo monogatari as a subclassification of otogi-zōshi in compiling Nihon bungaku zenshi (History of Japanese Literature) and so does Hisamatsu Senichi in his Nihon bungakushi (History of Japanese Literature).

Chieko Irie Mulhern describes otogi-zōshi in her "Otogi-zōshi. Short Stories of the Muromachi Period" in Monumenta Nipponica, XXIX (1974, pp. 184-185): "Otogi-zōshi refers to those small books (zōshi) of popular literature which were written for the explicit purpose of entertainment and moral edification. For the convenience of historical categorization, all the short stories written in the later Middle Ages (1300-1600) are usually inclusively called otogi-zōshi... Some three to four hundred stories can be classified according to subject matter."

1. Tales of aristocrats
   a. Love stories, derived from Genji Monogatari, etc.
   b. Poetic tales, derived from Ise Monogatari, etc.
   c. Stepchildren tales
      (1) Aristocratic version, derived from Ochikubo Monogatari, etc.
      (2) Folklore version

2. Religious tales
   a. Homosexual stories, concerning love as a means of religious inspiration
   b. Tales of religious awakening and confession
   c. Religious anecdotes
   d. Origins of temples or deities
   e. Tales of religious admonition or instruction

3. Tales of warriors
   a. Tales of fights with monsters and villains
   b. Legends of Genpei
   c. Tales of revenge, based on real events and folklore

4. Tales of commoners
   a. Didactic and farcical episodes
   b. Success stories
   c. Auspicious stories

5. Tales of foreign countries, based on folklore
   a. China
   b. India
   c. Fictitious lands
6. Tales of non-humans
   a. Marriage between humans and non-humans
   b. Tales of pseudo-poetry contests
   c. Pseudo-love stories
   d. Pseudo-war tales
   e. Pseudo-religious awakening tales

Ichiko Teiji 在古貞次 in his Oto-gi-zoshi in Nihon no Koten 日本の古典 (Japanese Classics), XIII (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1980, p. 91) includes the short stories written in the late Kamakura period and the early Edo period and claims that there are over five hundred stories that should be included in the oto-gi-zoshi genre. For further details, refer to "Hachikazuki: A Muromachi Short Story," Chigusa Stevens, Monumenta Nipponica, XXXII (1977); "Origins of the Companion Library," Barbara Ruch, Journal of Asian Studies, XXX (1970-71), and the Mulhern article referred to above.

9. See note 5.
10. Aki no yo no nagai monogatari may be translated as "A Long Tale for an Autumn Night" or "A Tale for a Long Autumn Night," which interpretation the author meant is difficult to determine from the original Japanese title.

11. Ichiko Teiji, Nihon no koten (Japanese Classics), XII (Tokyo: Shueisha, 1980), p. 91. Araki Yoshio 阿来義雄 also defines these eight stories as chigo monogatari in Chusei Kamakura Muromachi bungaku jiten 中世鎌倉室町文学辞典. However, homosexual tales other than these eight stories exist. They are: Sumai toit (n.d.); Chigo imamari monogatari 稚児行参物語 (Muromachi period); Chigo kannon enki 稚児観音経 (Kamakura period); Chigo no soshi 稚児の事 (Muromachi period); Kozuke no kimi shosoku 上野君消息 (?1333-1399); Aoba no fue no monogatari 青葉ノ火物語 (Muromachi period); Tochigi zakura 樹木桜 (date unknown, but included in Muromachi jidai shosetsushu 室町時代小説集). These stories are introduced as tales whose subject is homosexuality in "Monogatari bungaku sore (Survey of Tales in Literature) in Kokubungaku kaishaku to kansho 国文学解釈と (Interpretation and Appreciation of Japanese Literature) XXXV (1980) as well as in Nanshoku bunken shosho (Bibliography of Reference Works on Homosexuality). Why these stories were not included as "chigo monogatari" by Ichiko and Araki is puzzling.
Childs takes issue with Ichiko and Araki about their classifications of chigo monogatari: "Saga monogatari and Ben no Sōshi are love stories without religious import. Despite the major differences, these eight tales have been grouped together as chigo monogatari. They could be better understood if they were not grouped together as a genre, since two of them are simply entertaining love stories while the remaining six are didactic literature, in five of which love stories are used to present a religious lesson." Further studies seem to be necessary on the classification of chigo monogatari.

12 Childs, "Chigo monogatari," p. 130.

13 Ichiko, Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū, p. 131.


15 According to present views, both are likely: the possibility of early (post-natal) influence of various kinds has also been suggested as a "cause" of homosexual orientation. See, for example, Joan Ross Acocella and Richard R. Bootzin, Abnormal Psychology: Current Perspective (New York: Random House, 1980), pp. 322-329.


18 Emphasis added.

This synopsis is based on Margaret Childs' account in "Chigo Monogatari," p. 130.

20 The Tale of the Heike (Heike monogatari 平家物語?1218-1240) a war romance which describes the rise and fall of the Heike (Taira) family which was vanquished by the Genji (Minamoto) clan in the twelfth century. The author is unknown.


22 Ibid., p. 412.

23 Ibid., p. 409.
24 Ibid., p. 413.
27 Ichiko, Chūsei shōsetu no kenkyū, p. 137.
30 Takamura Itsue 高嶋逸枝, Josei no rekishi 女性の歴史 (History of Women), I (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973), pp. 82-83.
31 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
33 Ibid., p. 21.
34 Takamura, Josei no rekishi, p. 20.
35 The Confucian family was patriarchal with a strong emphasis on preserving a family and its assets through male lineage. The father was head of the family and the eldest son was second to him only. Filial piety was the duty of a child. The wife's role was rigidly limited to bearing children and managing the household. Procreation was the primary purpose of conjugal sexual intercourse; therefore, sexual desire and pleasure in the conjugal relationship were generally ignored. Sexual desire of the part of the wife was disapproved of and the penalty for adultery was death. Sexual desire on the part of the husband was tolerated; he was not allowed, however, to be exclusively homosexual. A discussion of this occurs in the following note.
36 The Tokugawa shoguns aimed at establishing a feudal family system based on the Confucian family code, in which conjugal affection was considered unseemly and the wife's sexual activity was exclusively for the purpose of procreation. Women were, in the main, classified into two groups according to their functions: wives were considered necessary for procreation and ladies of pleasure were viewed as sex objects. Therefore, licensed pleasure quarters for prostitution were established. Thus husbands were discouraged from regarding wives as sex objects but
allowed to hire a prostitute to fulfill their sexual desires. This was a result of the totalitarian ethics which attempted to discourage a man from having any loyalty besides that which he was expected to have for his master and for the performance of public duty. Homosexuality was suppressed for the same reason. For a discussion of the details of women's functional roles and the oppression of women, see Takamura, Josei no rekishi, V. 1, pp. 284-520. For more information concerning the suppression of homosexuality, see Donald H. Shively, James R. Branden and William P. Malm, Studies in Kabuki (Hawaii and Michigan: The University Press of Hawaii and the University of Michigan, 1978), pp. 4-36.

37 See pp. of this study.


40 Kanginshū 関吟集 (Anthology of Songs of Leisure). Compiled in 1518. The compiler is not known, but presumed to have been a priest. It contains 311 contemporary kouta (popular songs) in renga (linked verse) style which constitute seventy-five percent of the entire songs of Kanginshū. Twenty-five percent consists of Yamato bushi (folksongs of Yamato), Omi bushi (folksongs of Omi), and songs occurring in Nō and in kyōgen (comic interludes).

41 Wakashū 若衆, lit., "young man;" sometimes used specifically of young actors who appeared in wakashū (young men's) kabuki in the seventeenth century. Many of the youths played women's roles as well male parts. In the present context the term is used to mean a homosexual youth.

42 Wakashū 若衆.


Oki no tonakade
Fune kogeba
Awa no wakashū ni
Manekarete
Ajikenaya
Roge roga roga
Oserenu.
Warewa Sanuki no
Tsuruha no mono
Awa no wakashū ni
Hada furete
Ashi yoya
Hara yoya
Tsuruha no koto
Mo omowanu.

44. Okami, Nihon bungaku no rekishi, p. 433.


Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927), the illustrious writer of tales, said that "the artistic value of *Konjaku monogatari* is its description of lively humanity—its brutality." Kojima Masajirō commented on the compiler: "Was there anybody in Japan or even in the world who relentlessly observed human instincts and desires as they were?" However, Nagai Yoshinori, a scholar in Buddhist literature, tells that "The primary purpose for the compilation of *Konjaku monogatari* was to enlighten people." Igarashi Tsutomu states that "The two conflicting elements, religion and secular humanity, are uniquely harmonized in *Konjaku monogatari*." The above-stated comments are introduced in *Akiyama Ken* 秋山慶, et. al. ed., *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (Anthology of Tales of Ancient and Modern Times), *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集 (Anthology of Japanese Classical Literature), XXII (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1972), pp. 11-23.

46. Bishamon 釈迦門, one of the "Four Kings" and also considered one of the "Seven gods" of good fortune (Shichifukujin).


48. Minamoto no Takakuni 源隆国 (1004-1077), a scholar of Japanese literature was formerly assumed to have been the compiler. Kunitō Fumimaro 国東文彦 states in his introduction to *Konjaku monogatari* (see note 46) that Imano Tatsu 今野達 refuted the claim in Kokugo to kokubungaku (Feb. 1958) that Minamoto no Takakuni was the compiler.
The Master, a teacher of precepts in Buddhism.

Jōjū, a valet, chamberlain, or gentleman-in-waiting. The tale Ashihiki states that the main character was formerly "Jōjū" when he worked in the Imperial palace; however, this title is used to refer to him throughout the story; therefore, I have used Jōjū as though it were the main character's name.

biwa, the Japanese lute.

Minbu no Kyō, the Minister of Popular Affairs who was responsible for the census and taxation.

Sōzu, a high-ranking priest with supervisory powers over other monks.

Hieizan, a mountain located at the border of Kyōto city and Shiga prefecture and the site of Enryaku Temple, headquarters of the Tendai sect. Hence Mt. Hiei usually refers to Enryaku Temple.

Ohara, a historical site in Kyōto. The temples Jakkōin and Raigōin, and Sanzen'in are located here.


Ibid., p. 432.

Koi no yamai (lit., "illness of love").


Ibid.

源氏物語, a love romance which consists of fifty-four volumes written ?1001-?1016 by Murasaki Shikibu. The second volume, Bahakigi, the third volume, Utsusemi, and the sixteenth volume, Sekiya, are considered by some scholars to contain homosexual implications.

Shunki, (1026) by Fujiwara Sukefusa. Tsukki, (1136) by Fujiwara Yorinaga. Gyokuyō, (1163) by Fujiwara Kanefane. For more

sources, see Iwata Junichi 岩田俊一, Nanshoku bunken shoshi 男色文献集 (Bibliography of Reference Works on Homosexuality) 1956.

One must remember that fiction and other prose works in Japanese at this time were written almost exclusively by women; men wrote in Chinese. Poetry in Japanese, however, was composed by both sexes. The general lack of pronouns (and grammatical gender when they do occur) makes it difficult in most cases to determine whether a particular love poem was addressed to a man or to a woman.

64 Nonetheless, Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642-1693), in Nanshoku ōkagami 男色大鏡 (The Great Mirror of Manly Love, 1687) maintained that homosexuality is "superior." In Denpu monogatari 田夫物語 (A Tale of a Farmer, 1637), the author (unknown) maintains that heterosexuality is superior.

65 Ichiko, Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū, p. 131.

66 Ibid., p. 137.

67 Ibid., p. 138.

68 See Fujioka and Hiraide, Nihon fūzokushi.

69 Takamura, Josei no rekishi, II, p. 185.


71 In Hachikazuki (The Bowl Girl, n.d.), the fourth son of the Prime Minister and Hachikazuki, a maid-servant, marry for love. In Bunshō zōshi (The Tale of Bunsho, n.d.) Busho's daughter, Hachisu goze, marries the middle captain of the second rank and lives happily ever after. Most of them do not live happily ever after in real life in any period. In others, (such as Kowatō gitsune [The Fox of Kowata]), however, the ending is tragic.


74 Margaret Childs, "Aki no Yo no nagamonogatari" Monumenta Nipponica, XXXV, No. II, 1980, pp. 143-144.

Buddha said in his "Four Noble Truths" that man's suffering is caused by desire. According to Buddhist doctrine, complicating one's life in order to satisfy these desires is a useless pursuit because of the extreme brevity of this life; man's happiness is not attained in this life but will be attained in the next one.

Ichiko, Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū, p. 141.

For example, Oda Nobunaga's favorite poem runs:

Fifty years of this life
It is like a dream
Or an illusion
In comparison to
The next life.

Ningen gojūnen
Keten no uchi
Kurabureba
Yume maboroshi no
Gotoku nari.

Oda Nobunaga was a daimyo who tried to unify Japan after deposing Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537-1597), but he was assassinated by Akechi Mitsuhide (1526-1582). Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), who rose from the status of peasant to the position of the supreme ruler of Japan, and thereby is regarded as a model of a successful man, recited the following as his death-poem:

Like a drop of dew,
Now disappearing.
Fleeting is my life.
Everything in Naniwa is
A dream within a dream.

Tsuyu to ochi
Tsuyu to kieyuku
Waga inochi
Naniwa no koto wa
Yume no nata yume

Childs, "Chigo Monogatari," p. 128.

Mujōkan (transiency of life) and mono no aware (pathos) were two related concepts for the ancient Japanese. The perishability of life made life beautiful; the cherry blossom is beautiful because it falls so soon. Mujō (impermanence) was intuitively perceived and was the basis of the ancient Japanese aesthetic view of life and nature. This was the original Japanese sensibility and it still survives. Mujōkan is expressed with spontaneity in ancient literature written by female authors. However, mujōkan which appears in medieval literature is a philosophical interpretation of life. The authors were trying to teach people how to view life and nature. The idea of the transiency of life, which was tinged with a more pessimistic outlook than the earlier concept had been, was supplied to people's cognitive faculties; thus mujōkan matured as an idea under the influence of Buddhism.

Sansom, Japan: A Short Cultural History, p. 352.

Ibid., p. 404.


It should be pointed out here that some of the stories concern sexual exploitation of the chigo by the preists. Seisuihō Book Six opens with an anecdote in which a chigo manifests his antipathy toward sexual exploitation. "Who invented homosexual relationships?" asked a chigo. Given the answer "The Great Teacher Kōbō of Mt. Kōya," the boy's response is, "I hate him." The work also contains many anecdotes concerning the chigo's persistent hunger. One of them runs: "A chigo, returning from the banquet, showed signs of sickness. His fellow chigo was worried and asked, 'What is wrong?' The chigo answered, 'I'm suffering from heartburn from eating too many rice cakes.' His friend said, 'I wish I could have such suffering.'"

The anecdote that portrays the homosexual exploitation of boys the most scathingly is the following: "A priest sympathized with a chigo who had very poor parents and said, 'You never have anything you need for congratulatory occasions, but you do have one valuable asset, that is, your penis. The chigo answered, 'I don't think I even have that. People say 'yours looks too worn out for your age. It does not look like yours.'"

Yoshizawa, Muromachi bungakushī, p. 182.

Kana-zōshi 仮名草子. The general term for the prose literature written between 1600 and 1682. The name originally was used to distinguish writings entirely in kana (the Japanese syllabary)—or in a mixture of Chinese characters and kana—from texts in Chinese. In the Meiji period, however, it came to be used to designate the wide variety of literary works that appeared prior to the publication of Saikaku's Life of an Amorous Man in 1682. The genre embraces not only fiction but works of a near-historical nature, pious or moral tracts, books of practical information, translations from Chinese and European literature, guidebooks, evaluations of courtesans and actors, and miscellaneous essays," says Donald Keene, "Kana zoshi" in World Within Walls (New York: Grove Press, 1976), p. 149. Also see Richard Lane, "The Beginnings of the Modern Japanese Novel: Kana-zōshi, 1600-1682," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, XX No. 3 and 4, 1957, pp. 644-701.

Yoshizawa, Muromachi bungakushī, p. 182.

Ibid., p. 183.
Wakashū kabuki 若衆歌舞伎, a type of theatre in which male actors took the parts of women. This flourished after onna kabuki (performances by female actors) was prohibited in 1629 for the same reason that the wakashū kabuki was banned in 1652.

Honda, Isetsu Nihonshi, p. 279.


Ichiko, Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū, p. 142.

Iwata Jun'ichi 岩田進一, Nanshoku bunken shoshi 男色文献叢書 (Bibliography of Reference Works on Homosexuality) (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1957), PP. 36-120.

Ibid., pp. 24-254.

Ibid., p. 173.

Ibid., pp. 172-237.
TORIBEYAMA MONOGATARI
The author of Toribeyama monogatari is unknown (although he was presumably a priest). Also not established is the exact date the tale was written. However, Yoshizawa Yoshinori (Muromachi bungakushi, p. 182) presumes that it dates from approximately the middle of the Muromachi period because the storyline of Toribeyama monogatari is identical to that found in the story depicting the love of Prince Takanaga and Lady Ichinomiya, a tale which appears in the Taiheiki (Chronicle of Grand Pacification, 1368-1375). The original text of Toribeyama monogatari is not extant, but a copy dated 1840 is included in Seikadō bunko. The text I have used for this translation is found in Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei and has no annotation. There is no indication that this tale was initially in the form of a picture-scroll (e maki mono), although Aki no yo no naga monogatari and Ashihiki seem to have been circulated in this form according to Yokoyama Shigeru and Matsumoto Takanobu, compilers of the Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei.

Notes have been kept to a minimum. Characters for Chinese and Japanese words and proper names are given in a separate glossary.
Over and above everything else, that which is most uncertain is this life. Some time ago, in the countryside of Musashi province, there were some priests who spent their time in study. The head priest was a man of eminence of such and such a name. One of his disciples, Minbukyo by name, was not only a man of pure countenance and profound outlook, but he was also well known for having thoroughly mastered all the volumes of the difficult Book of History, as well as the classics of his own culture. Therefore, the priest had invited Minbu to serve him, thus showing him a singular honor. He had been serving the priest there for a long time. Usually waking up to the sound of the wind stirring the pine trees, he pondered over streams and valleys, seeking the divine origins of the Law. Due to his extreme diligence, he was recognized by others as having the potential to become a guiding light in the interpretation of the Law. Hence, he was respected by those around him.

One day it so happened that high ranking priests from all over the land were invited to the Imperial Palace to attend Buddhist services. There was a commotion among those of all ranks as they prepared for the journey. It was the beginning of summer: trees were thick with leaves, flowers and plants were colorful and fresh, and the evening moon was waning. Those departing felt reluctant to leave Musashino, so attached were they to the place. They consoled each other and talked about how everything would be at home after they left. Eventually, some ten days
or so after they left the East, they arrived at the Capital at daybreak, leaving behind them their short weary night's dreams dreamt in shallow sleep.

Everything in society was decaying. The Imperial Palace, however, had preserved its divine dignity, something worthy of admiration. Time passed and the service was ultimately concluded; but still permission to return home was not given. Days were spent in idleness and the New Year came again. The sky looked bright and clear. Green grass was appearing here and there from beneath the snow. People were feeling at ease. In particular, the sight of those who were playing court football in the garden was something worth seeing indeed! The way the players were dressed was so beautiful that no words could describe it.

One day in the season when the fog begins to disappear from the mountainsides in the suburbs of the Capital, Minbukyō, wishing to see the flowers he had not yet seen, set out on his way to Kitayama with a friend who had the same intention. Young and old, noble and commoner were all dressed in various colors as they thronged the street. Somewhere in the crowd there was a carriage, quite conspicuous, parked at the roadside under a tree and attended by servants. Minbu heard someone say, "Look at those beautiful flowers. How lovely is this grass in which violets grow!" A man, perhaps not quite twenty-eight, emerged from the carriage. He was stylishly clothed in silk of various colors. As he gazed at the flowers, his stance, his appearance from behind, his hair style—all looked so immeasurably beautiful that it was hard to believe that he was real. From the time that Minbu caught a glimpse of him he was utterly distracted. Even after the man had left, he stared
at the place where the man had been as if he had fallen in love with the spot. His servants noticed this but thought it would be imprudent to mention it. Cherishing the image of the man, Minbu returned home. Day and night he thought about him, overwhelmed by grief. He suffered from the pangs of love, inexpressible and infinitely deep, and longed to see the man again. Although he wandered around everywhere in search of him he soon realized that he had no means of finding him no matter how much he longed for him; thus he returned home after having searched in vain.

However, when Minbu passed through Bōmon in Shijō, he came upon a residence which, because of its abundance of aged trees, appeared to be the home of a member of the nobility. Intrigued for some reason, he entered through one side of the gate. There he saw a chigo, superb in looks, clothed in a robe printed with plums, butterflies, and birds. The chigo seemed to be gazing at the branches now devoid of blossoms, and he hummed:

\[
\text{Time has passed;}
\]
\[
\text{Beauty is gone.}
\]
\[
\text{How short is}
\]
\[
\text{The prime of life}
\]
\[
\text{Of a blossom.}
\]

He was leaning ever so slightly over the railing, resting his cheek on his elbow. The sight was exciting enough to stir up Minbu’s blood. Looking closely, he noticed that the man was the very person whom he had met in Kitayama—the one he had been longing to see at least once more if only in a dream. His emotions were so aroused that he was unable to move. When the man suddenly noticed Minbu watching him he hurried into the house with a look of uneasiness on his face. Trying to understand
what had happened, Minbu stood there for a while. But when the templeell, which he was used to hearing pealed cruelly as it told of the
arrival of nightfall, he realized he could stay no longer and barely
managed to get home. 17

Thereafter, all he could do was lie sick in bed, a circumstance
that obliged him to neglect his duty to the priest. Medication was
prescribed by order of the priest, but Minbu showed no sign of recovery.
One evening, when a gentle rain had brought on a surge of loneliness, an
attendant 18 of long service came to his sickbed. He informed him that
he had found a man who was well acquainted with the person Minbu had
cought a glimpse of the other evening. Upon learning that the person
was the son of the Middle Councilor, 19 such and such by name, 20 Minbu
raised his head from his pillow and asked if he could find some way to
approach the young man. His attendant replied, "For that purpose, I
have located a small house to the east of the man's residence. Shinobu
weed 21 was growing thick under its roof and the fence was covered with
bushes. It looked deserted. However, I secretly peeked into the house
and saw a man of perhaps sixty years of age leaning over a charcoal fire
buried in ashes trying to warm his hands. I looked more closely and
discovered that the person inside was my close friend. I spoke to him.
Then, in the process of talking about each other's past, we ended up in
a very intimate discussion which extended to that very person. If you
move into the house as soon as you get better and live there for a
while, you may have a chance to talk to him, if only through the
screen." 22
As Minbu nodded with a smile, his friend, Shikibu, by who was also studying under the priest, came to visit him. "How do you feel?" his friend asked. "If you continue to confine yourself like this, you will become even more depressed. Well, then, why don't you move to the house, wherever it is, just to make yourself feel better." He spoke thusly in a sympathetic manner. Minbu was delighted to hear such encouragement, but responded gently that he was not sure if he should take such a step. An expression of anxiety showed in his eyes as he said, "I wish I could do so, but I don't know what the priest would say." "I am sure he will not think anything wrong with it. I will go and talk to him" said his friend before leaving. After a while he came back and reported, "I have talked with him briefly about your problem. He answered that the decision is yours. Hurry and send somebody to get the house ready for you," he said as he left.

Minbu rejoiced and his mind was relieved. He got himself ready and started on his way to the house, on the roof of which Shino was growing. The man of the house welcomed him and as days went by they became quite close. The old man had a son who was kind-hearted in spite of his youth. He often came to entertain them. One day Minbu called him over to his side and talked about his past problem. This young man sympathized with him and said, "I have been serving his father for a long time, so I know him very well. That young man is the only child they have and they care for him very lovingly. His name is Tō no Ben. He is extraordinary in looks and excellent in personality; so his parents' love for him is boundless and they do not let him go out
without good reason. Day and night he makes it a habit to study poetry and practice calligraphy. I am the only one who frequently visits and entertains him. I cannot bear to see you so totally infatuated with him. Why don't you go up to him? Though it is hard to tell if he will accept you or not, you should tell him of your wholehearted love. Even the weeds by the waterside bend with the water."

Minbu, infinitely pleased with these remarks, picked out a sheet of Michinoku paper that was old and yellowed and composed the following verses.

Passing by,
I saw a branch.
I cannot forget
The image
Of the blossom.

On a moonlit night,
On a day of low tide,
And on a windy day
Wind and wave lashed an islan,d,
Wetting my sleeves.

The young man took the missive to the house in the west before nightfall of the same day.

The people in Ben's house were pleased to see him and they talked about all kinds of strange and interesting things that had recently happened in the world. Ben must have felt the pathos of autumn very deeply. He drew a picture of two herbs of autumn on a white poem card with such skill that no other could compare with it. The young man went up to Ben and said, "Please tell me the secret of beautiful writing. This time, I have come to see you for a specific purpose. If
it were not for the fact that other people are present, I would hand you a letter and explain the circumstances surrounding it in detail, though it is not easy to talk about the matter. The fact is, I felt sorry for him, since he suffered considerably as a result of his deep feelings for you. Furthermore, it was difficult to refuse his desperate request." Thereupon he told the lord all that had happened. The lord blushed and did not say anything. "I am afraid it may be imprudent of me, but I could never throw away this letter which was written to you as an expression of his overwhelming love for you." In this way he tried to arouse Ben's interest. Then Ben opened the letter slightly beneath the table and gave it a quick glance. "What excellent timing," the young man thought, and thereupon pressed Lord Ben for a word of response. "In this world of liars," Ben said, "with a stranger such as this—-I don't know." The young man continued to try to persuade Lord Ben to give Minbu some encouragement until someone entered the room.

In view of the circumstances, then, the man, had failed. He returned home and told Minbu everything. Minbu was even more obsessed with thoughts of Ben. "I still would like to hear a word from him. If only he would send me a note, how nice it would be as a remembrance of this place of temporary residence," insisted Minbu. "Please go back one more time and try to get a definite answer concerning what he thinks of me. How inconvenient it is that I have to depend on you for this!" Thus, Minbu even criticized the young man who was trying to assist him. Both sleeves were not enough to hold the shower of tears. The young
man's compassion for Minbu was so deep that he decided not to worry about the future, but to get a return poem at least. Thus he continued to try to persuade Lord Ben to respond.

"I am not a ruthless person. I am well aware of human feelings. And now I am ashamed of my previous hesitance," said Lord Ben. Scribbling with his brush as if he were merely practicing:

The person
You cannot forget
Since the time
You met him
Must be someone else. 29

The young man took the poem, hurried back home, and handed it to Minbu. "Here it is" he said. Minbu impatiently opened the letter to look at it. "What a soft, flowing hand it is written in. It looks like a bird's footprint. His avoidance of the running style indicates his potential for future advancement. How lovely it is!" Minbu, unable to hold himself back, wrote a response immediately:

The image of the blossom
Neither is it falling
Nor did it fall.
How can I take it
For another? 30

"It is not an ordinary blossom. It is impossible to mistake it for another. What kind of wind does it take to make it fall?" pleaded Minbu.

The go-between again went back and told Lord Ben what had happened. Ben looked at the poem again and again saying, "If someone hears about
this, there will be problems. I really must do something about the matter," he said as he wrote:

Do not
Say such things.
Your words
Cause embarrassment.
I cannot help looking sad. 31

And he added, "Please, please do not cause any trouble." The young man sympathized with Lord Ben and told Minbu of the situation.

Though recovering from illness, Minbu still suffered through sleepless nights and days. Somehow he managed to escape undetected one evening and sneaked into Lord Ben's residence. A light fragrance softly permeated everything. It could almost be called the "embodiment of Buddha's Paradise." 32 Minbu peeked in through an opening in the door. He saw the youth sitting quietly, surrounded by many open books under a dim light, close by an opened screen painted with flowers and falling maple leaves. His soft and fragrant face, visible through locks of falling hair, was reminiscent of a dewy flower at dawn or the sight of a willow tree swaying in the wind at evening. What Minbu had seen in Kitayama was nothing compared to Ben's beauty at this moment.

Minbu opened the door and went in. With Ben's gentle and hospitable attitude, he felt as if he were in a dream. He sat close beside Ben and talked through tears of the bitter and sweet of the past, saying, "You can imagine how deeply touched I am now to be sitting beside you here." Ben's expression as he blushed and turned away was incomparable to anything and would have easily overshadowed the sight of lovely and beautiful dewy autumn ohi 33 with its fully grown abundant
branches. "My heart is now free of depression, and the weariness of the past few days has been dispelled on this very night of meeting." Minbu sighed, but soon the bird that sings with eight voices, whatever suffering it may have been trying to express, started to cry and hurried them toward their inevitable parting. Minbu opened the door for their painful parting, wiping tears, as he did so, with sleeves which were not copious enough to hold them all. That the morning moon seemed to him to be a keepsake further cast a shadow over his heart.

When will I
Forget his image?
The morning moon
Is the reminder
Of our parting this morning.

Thus Minbu gave expression to his sadness. Ben, too, feeling the misery of parting composed the following poem:

The time is running out, and
Now you are
Leaving me,
The moon in the great sky—
A memory of you.

They turned around, looked at each other, and parted.

From this time on, they saw each other more often and their relationship deepened. Soon spring had gone. The passage of time is the law of this world. Now there followed many depressing days of summer clothes and the day soon came when Minbu had to return in order to prepare for his trip back to the East.
In the middle of the excitement, while others were readying pretty
clothes of various colors to wear on the journey home, Minbu was beside
himself with grief and wetting his sleeves with a flood of tears as a
result of secret suffering.

While Minbu was thusly overcome with a desire to see Ben again so
that they might talk quietly, it was decided that he and his group would
leave the Capital the next day. That evening then, would be the last
opportunity for the two to meet, and hence it was impossible for Minbu
to stop the flow of tears. He finally became distraught to the point of
lunacy as if he were a floating buoy.

On the twentieth of the month, when the moon was finally high in
the sky, the go-between sneaked into the house through the same door
after everybody had gone to bed. He recalled his sweet memories of the
end of May, the fragrance of flowers and sleeves. But the air felt
different this evening and his heart was full of anxiety. The screen
was open. He suddenly pushed it aside slightly and saw that Ben was
already wasting away from crying. Minbu, who felt the same way, was
also crying as he lay himself down beside Ben. "What fate has caused
this? If your love for me is true, please do not forget how you feel at
this moment," said Minbu as the moon cast its shadow dimly through the
southern window. Minbu, looking at the shadow, composed the following:

Oh, look!
The moon has its shadow
As its lover,
Even on a cloudy night
The shadow will not forget the moon.
Thereupon he cried out louder than before, unable to hold back his tears. Ben, too, his eyes full of tears, tried in vain to open his eyes as he said:

I cannot help it,
Even the shadow
Of the moon
I cannot discern
Through my shower of tears.\textsuperscript{41}

"Since life is so fleeting, I wish I could delay our parting, even at the cost of my life," lamented Ben. They recalled that there was a passage in an old tale which said, "One thousand nights seemed as though they were as short as one night," and felt that this must certainly be true. The time was not autumn, thus making night especially short for them; they felt as if it were shorter than a dream. The song of a bird trying to express some sentiment drove them to distraction. Holding each other's hands, they promised to meet again sometime, somewhere and parted in tears. Having misgivings about how many years later it would be before he could come back over \textit{Osakayama}, Minbu cried out:

Knowing life
Is transient,
It is very hard
To cross over
\textit{Osakayama}.\textsuperscript{42}

Gradually the days passed by and Minbu arrived in Musashi province. In the Capital, Lord Ben would not even leave his bed for two days because the fragrance which permeated the pillow made him feel as if Minbu were lying there beside him. He cried so much that his sleeves
might have been dissolved by the tears, but there was no one there to share his sadness.

His only consolation at first was that the go-between did come to visit him on occasion to hear his private thoughts, but even his visits gradually ceased, and there was no way to contact him. Left alone and stricken with the sadness of love, Ben spent days and sleepless nights in bed, looking at the sky. Whenever there was a breeze, it too brought back memories. The clear moon rising over the mountain-side vividly reminded him of his lover's verse—"The moon has its shadow as its lover...." Remembrance now made him feel bitter, but at the same time every recollection was so dear to him.

The evening sky  
He sang about,  
How dear it is!  
The same moon  
In the sky.

He murmured to himself in this way and thought about what people would think of him for being so weak-minded.

However, Ben's longing for Minbu grew more and more intense—so much so that he would not see anybody. His parents worried about his withdrawal and prayed to the gods; they even tried a ritual or prayer, but it was ineffectual. He showed signs of an unreasonable indulgence in thought, and frequently he would start to cry, covering his face and presenting a look of unbearable pain.

Among those who worried about him was his valet. He would go to his bed-side and stroke his hair. "How sad you look! You seem so de-
pressed. I have attended to your needs since you were a baby and am still alive only to see to it that you will have a happy future. Whatever you have on your mind, you should tell me all about it. How modest you are to suffer along for so many days," he said in attempt to comfort Lord Ben. Ben raised his head a little from his pillow and said in a voice full of pain, "I appreciate your consideration very much. I should tell you all that I have on my mind, but it will not do any good. It is useless to talk about it. Every day I have been wishing to drown myself in the Natori river\textsuperscript{45} in order to destroy the rumor. I realize now that I will soon die, and I feel it may be improper for me to journey to the next world without first making a confession." Then he began to explain what had happened. He wept continuously as he spoke about everything from the time of his first meeting with Minbu, something which he had not intended to reveal even after his death.

The valet felt pity and incredulity for his excessive indulgence in his feelings and wept with him. "That is what I thought," he said. "Please ask yourself if all this is such an unusual thing. It is really nothing you have to hide like this, but because you are so reserved, you have made yourself sick enough to die." The attendant then told Lord Ben's parents about the situation. They looked thoughtful and said simply, "What is he so ashamed of that he hides his feelings? How foolish of him! If that is what he wants, we are only glad to have Minbu here with us." "If we send somebody else to seek him, he may bring the wrong person. We want you to go to the East and bring Minbu back," ordered the parents. The valet was very pleased with this. Stopping at Lord Ben's bedside he said, "By your parents' order I am
going to the East to find the person you are in love with. I shall hurry there and bring him back. Please be a little more patient and don't worry." With these words the valet consoled him and started on his way, travelling day and night.

The valet looked for Minbu's residence, and upon finding it, asked to see him. Even before he could explain about Ben and question Minbu about his feelings for him, the valet burst into tears. Minbu felt he was going mad as he listened to the valet's words. After a while, Minbu said, "To tell you the truth, after that happened, out of what we call 'reservedness,' I could not step out and speak up, so I let the days slip by. Your coming here to bring me such news makes me feel ashamed. I did not forget him for a single moment, but because of my duty, over which I have no control, I have spent my days in vain. I cannot endure hearing of his wholehearted love for me any longer. I will go and see him at any cost."

Minbu immediately got up and went to his friend who had kindly sympathized with him when he was first suffering from infatuation. "A relative of mine," he lied, "whom I have long cared about went to the Capital and was taken sick there. He sent me a message that he has only a short time to live and wants to see me once more as he has something to tell me. Please make arrangements for me to be given leave for about thirty days or so in order that I might go and see this relative at least once more while he is living." "That should be no problem," said his friend, who proceeded to talk to the priest at once. The priest gave him leave, indicating that he felt the request was "reasonable."
Minbu and the valet were pleased with this and left Musashi Province early in the morning when the insects were responding to the wailing sound of the autumn wind, weeds and grass were wet, and the moon was waning. As they went along, Minbu, looking up at the snow on Mt. Fuji, could not help but associate it with his love.

Like the snow on
Mt. Fuji,
That does not easily disappear,
I hope that
His life will continue.

Thus he expressed his feelings as he continued on. At the toll-barrier of Kiyomi, he could not hold back tears which were copious enough to "melt his sleeves;" and he was unable to sleep at a fisherman's house where he was spending the night. He could not help feeling that the ebb and flow of the waves were like his life, and his loneliness was so intense that it defied comparison. Feeling oppressive pain Minbu composed the following:

Rather than being
Possessed by grief
I wish
I could disappear
Like foam on the water.

The days went by and finally they arrived at Tsuchiyama. They were pleased and as they were preparing to go on into the Capital a letter arrived causing them sorrow. "I wonder what has happened?" said Minbu, feeling anxious. When he opened the letter he read that the sick person had grown weaker day by day and had died yesterday evening. He tried to calm himself; he tried to convince himself that he was dream-
ing. But Minbu could not stop crying. "Wishing to see him once more," he lamented, "I came from far away. How fragile his life was that he died without waiting even a day or two!" The valet could easily imagine that he would want to see the deceased Lord Ben who had died of love for him, if only as he was at the last minute of life. He himself also was in great despair since he had raised the lord from infancy.

"Since I have come this far," Minbu said, "I should hurry to the Capital to try to console his parents, who must be crying helplessly over his death. I also want to take care of the funeral." "I am grateful to you," said the valet. "Since you are so sincere I do not blame you for what has happened. It cannot be helped that the deceased had such a fragile life," said the valet weeping. Such a sight was even more painful to him. As Minbu lamented, grinding his teeth, "To have one's beloved die is not unusual in life, but a case like this is beyond my comprehension." They arrived at the capital on the following day.

Lord Ben's father and even his mother, though she did not seem to be a stupid person, ran out to the door and grabbed Minbu by the sleeves. At this, the valet threw himself on the floor and the voice with which he gave vent to his grief was too painful to bear. After a while, Ben's father addressed the man who had been valet to his son:

"After you left here, he seemed to feel better and his pain was almost gone; but then, as days passed, his condition became serious. Even medicines were no longer effective and he died. We tried to call him back to life but it was a useless effort. He had passed away. Just imagine my son's sadness when he died and his mother's uncontrollable grief! Yet, there is no use crying over the past. I shall have him
cremated at Toribeyama—and he will turn into smoke and rise." He wept as he spoke. The people around him also sobbed and wailed until they almost lost their voices.

Minbu went into Ben's room and upon seeing his lover's clothes which he had left and the furniture he had once used day and night, he burst into tears. In addition to the furniture, he also found a fan—one which his lover had used often, still bearing the vague outline of his calligraphy: "How dear is the mark of his tears of love!" thought Minbu.

I don't resent
A fleeting life like that of dew
That waits to die in shadow.
How sad it is
To die without seeing you.  

Lord Ben had left this poem on the fan. His writing looked so weak that Minbu could imagine how very critically ill he was when he wrote it. Minbu was overwhelmed by grief. He was haunted by Ben's image and could not forget him even for a moment. He firmly made up his mind to die for the one just departed, feeling that his life no longer served any purpose.

While Minbu endured oppressive sadness in tears, the seventh day after Lord Ben's death arrived. On this day, Ben's father and the valet went to the place where Ben's body had been placed. Minbu also waited for them there. At Toribeyama Minbu felt as if the smoke of cremation were trying to reach out to him and he felt a nearness to it. As he was gazing with sadness at the dew of Adashino, he was so delighted with
the idea that he was going to die and be buried under the grass where
Lord Ben lay that he composed the following:

The evening smoke
Of Toribeyama
Oh, it does not last long!
How, then, can my life
Last any longer?

Ben's father added a verse of his own:

A drop of dew
That disappeared
From the grass—
What can I do with myself,
A father of dew?

Minbu went to the temple to pray and, finding the place empty, soon
started to shed enough tears to lose his senses. After a while, he set
flowers on the altar and prayed quietly, speaking as if he were speaking
to a living person: "How sad it is that you passed away without even
waiting but a short while longer. You must have thought I was very
cruel, but things did not go as I wished them to in this life. We were
not destined to continue our deep relationship in this life, but I hope
that we can spend our time together on the same lotus flower in the next
life."60

"This may be sinful,61 but I won't be able to change my feelings
for you even in later years." As he made this pronouncement, he
stealthily took a dagger from his robe and was about to stab himself,
when a person nearby, catching sight of him, stopped him with a stern
warning: "What are you doing?" The Middle Councilor exclaimed in tears,
"It is no use to continue to cry over Ben's death. If you die, you will
bring us even more grief on top of what we have already experienced." He tried to console him further by saying, "You cared about him and even looked after his funeral, and in so doing the deceased's sin has been lessened." 62

Minbu was unable to achieve what he had hoped to do, but he did not return home to Musashi province. He built a cottage out of thatch near Kitayama where he secluded himself and lived as a recluse priest until he eventually attained enlightenment.

It is rewarding
To have gone astray.
But for that experience,
How could I appreciate
This clear moon? 63

Thus, he admired the moon and lived in that spot for some time. But one evening, with the bell of the temple guiding him, he went away. How transient life is!
NOTES TO THE TRANSLATION

1Toribeyama 鳥部山, the site of a crematory outside of Kyōto in the foothills of Higashiyama.

2Musashi province 武蔵国, present day, an area that covered Fuchū (Tokyo) and extended north to Saitama prefecture.

3Such and such, nani kashi 何かし. The use of this phrase to refer to a person whose name is not known was a common convention in this period.

4Minbukyō 民部郷, an official title, but in this tale, this title is treated as if it were proper noun. See "Note," entry 52.

5Shih chi 史記 (Japanese Shiki), The Book of History. A history consisting of 130 volumes and written by Ssu Ma-ch’ien 司馬遷 (B.C. 145-86).

6The Law, hō 法. In this context it means buppō 佛法 (The teaching of the Buddha).

7Buddhist service or mishihō 身仏 refers to the Imperial practice of summoning many eminent priests from all over Japan to have them pray for the well-being of the nation for a period of seven days, beginning on the Eighth Day of the First Month.

8Musashi province 武蔵国, i.e., (see note 2) locates east of the capital.

9kemari 腰鞠, a variety of football played by the aristocracy. Purpose of the game was to keep a ball in the air using only the feet.

10It has been a custom in Japan for each person to dress up in his or her best clothing on New Year's Day.

11One of the conventional expressions used to refer to spring.

12Kitayama 北山, a collective noun for the mountains north of Kyoto.

13A man of twenty-eight seems to be too old to be called "chigo" 雅兒 (generally seven to seventeen years of age), but the author of the tale uses the term to refer to him in a later chapter.

14Bōmon in Shijō 四条坊門, an alley that crosses Shijō, the "fourth avenue."
It was and is a custom in Japan that most of the homes are fenced or walled; the gate is an entrance to the front door of the house. This seems to suggest that the gate consists of two doors side by side.

Minbu presumably was in a trance when he was rude enough to step into a stranger's residence, but, on hearing the sound of the bell, he was awakened to the reality of his being an uninvited guest.

Minbu's male servant.

Chūnagon 中納言, or Middle councilor. Title of an official whose duty it was to announce imperial edicts.

Referring to note 3.

Shinobu gusa, a kind of fern, which is called shinobu ("endure"), because it continues to grow even when it is removed from soil. It was a custom in Japan to bundle the weed and hang it under the roof.

Normally a screen (mi) was set between the entrance to a room and the terrace.

Shikibu 式部, an officer of the Ministry of Ceremonies. This title occurs in the text as if it were a proper noun. Therefore, I treat it a name instead of translating it as a title.

Tō-no-Ben 藤の弁. To is a man's family (e.g., Suzuki) name and Ben is his official title, i.e., Controller.

Michinoku kami みちのく紙, a fine crepe rice paper. The name is derived from the place where it was produced, Michinoku (northern Japan).

Sugigate ni
Yoso no kousue o
Miteshiyori
Wasure mo yaranu
Hana no omokage

Tsuki no yo mo
Shiho no hiruma mo
Nami kase no
Kawakanu wa
Oshima no ama no sodenaratemo
A kakekotoba or “pivot word” carries a double meaning; hiruma carries the double meaning of daytime (昼間) and time of low tide (潮の干時 )

27. 畑 and 紙, names of weeds which grow in the fall.

28. 紙, a thick fancy square-shaped rice paper card used for writing poems or sketching pictures.

29. Mieshi yori
Wasure no yaranu
Onokake wa
Yoso no kozue no
Hana niya aramu.

30. Chirisomesu
Sakimo nokoranu
Onokake o
Ikateke yosono
Hana ni makahen

31. Hatsukashino
Morino koto no ha
Morasuna yo
Tsuihi sikure no
Iro ni itsu tomo

32. Buddha’s Paradise, hotoke no kuni or land of the Buddha, which presumably refers to Jōdo, the Pure Land.

33. Refer to note 27.

34. The bird that sings with eight voices, (yage no tori 八声の鳥), the bird that signals dawn.

35. Ben and Minbu’s relationship was not sanctioned by the family at this time; Minbu had to leave without being seen by Ben’s family.

36. Onokake yo
itsu wasurarem
Ariake no
Tsuki o katan no
Kesa no wake ni

37. Kakiritote
Tachiwakare naha
Osora no
Tsuki moyo kimi ka
Katami naramashi
Depressing days of summer clothes (uki natsu goromo no he 夏 服 の 日). The robes people wore in this period must have been unbearably uncomfortable in Japan's humid summer.

The young man who brought Ben and Minbu together is called a go-between (nakatachi 中立) here.

Osakayama is a mountain which is located between Kyōto (the capital during this period) and Shiga prefecture. Osaka is often used as a kakekotoba 借語 ("pivot word") for au 邂 "meet."

Ben objectively views his attitude and criticizes himself for being too weak to overcome his emotions using his logical faculties, hence the use of the word weak-minded.

Natori gawa 名取 川, a famous river in Miyagi prefecture (northern part of Japan). Na toru also means "destroy a name or reputation."

Ben's concern about rumors may be due to self-consciousness stemming from extreme shyness; the passage cannot necessarily be interpreted as implying a negative view of homosexuality but may be interpreted as implying such a view toward desire which has become an obsession.
47 Minbu's character is not described as reserved, in fact, he appears to be rather aggressive. His explanation to Ben's valet suggests that Minbu's passion was rather short-lived, implying that indulgence in passion is to no purpose.

48 Fuji no yuki 雪の峰. Snow remains on the peak of Mt. Fuji even in summer.

49 Kiekataki
Fuji no miyuki ni
Takuete mo
Nao nakakare to
Onou inochi so

50 雪見の関. At this time, Japan was divided into many provinces. At the entrance of each province there was a toll-barrier which every traveller had to pass through. This controlled access to any given province.

51 Naka naka ni
Kokoro tsukushi ni
Sakitachite
Ware sae nami no
Awate kienamu

Awate is a kakekotoba which brings to mind both awade "without seeing" and awa "(form) of waves (nami)."

52 Tsuchiyama 土山 , a town in Shiga prefecture and a station on the Tōkaidō.

53 It is a deviation from standard manners for a lady of the nobility to run out to the door and seize a man's sleeve on their first meeting. Her act indicates that she is upset enough to have lost her sense of propriety.

54 The Buddhist idea that one can attain a permanent and real life after death makes Ben's father believe that Ben can ascend (rise) to such a higher state of reality.

55 Hikake matsu
Tsuyu no inochi wa
Oshikarate
Awate kienamu
Koto so kanashiki

Hikake is a "pivot word" meaning "for many days" and "in secrecy" (hikage "shadow").

56 It was a custom to hold a prayer ritual for the deceased on the seventh day after the death.
Adashino 徒野, a graveyard which was located in the foothills of Atagoyama.

Sakitachishi
Toribe no yamano
Yukemuri
Aware itsumate
Kienokare toka

Sakitachite
Kieshi asachino
Sue no tsuyu
Noto no shitsuku no
Mi o ikanisemu.

Spending time together on the same lotus flower refers to the Buddhist belief that people can live happily together upon going to gokuraku 極楽 or "Paradise."

Attachment to anything is considered to be sinful in Buddhism. Minbu's inability to change his feelings means he is a failure as a priest.

The "sin," in the viewpoint of the father, presumably refers to Ben's dying while his parents were still alive and thus not fulfilling his filial duty. Dying before one's parents, and thereby causing the parents to experience grief, is considered very unfilial by Confucian ethics.

Aranu michini
Mayou mo ureshi
Mayowasuwa
Ikate sayakeki
Tsuki o mimashiya.
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土山
稚児の噂
若道不知
仮面の告白

shikishi
Ōsakayama
Natori gawa (Natori River)
Fujisan (Mt. Fuji)
Kiyomi
Tsuchiyama
Chigo no uwasa
Nyakudō shirazu
Kamen no kokuhaku