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## Flowers, Trees, and Writing Brushes: Extraordinary Lovers in the Otogi-zoshi Kazashi no Himegimi and Sakuraume no Soshi

Haley R. Blum  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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Flowers, Trees, and Writing Brushes:  
Extraordinary Lovers in the *Otogi-zōshi Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no soshi*

A Thesis Presented

by

HALEY BLUM

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Approved as to style and content by:

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Stephen Forrest, Chair

---

Doris Barga, Member

---

Stephen Miller, Member

---

Amanda C. Seaman, Director  
Asian Languages and Literatures  
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

---

William Moebius, Chair  
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

ABSTRACT

FLOWERS, TREES, AND WRITING BRUSHES: THE EXTRAORDINARY LOVERS OF *KAZASHI NO*

*HIMEGIMI AND SAKURAUME NO SŌSHI*

SEPTEMBER 2013

HALEY BLUM, B.A., COLBY COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Stephen Forrest

This thesis presents translations of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*, two tales belonging to the genre of medieval Japanese narrative known as *otogi-zōshi*, and of the subcategory known as *iruimono* (tales of non-humans). Chapter 1 provides context, beginning with a brief history of *otogi-zōshi* and a description of residual challenges in its research, including the parameters of the genre and problems with its nomenclature. This is followed by a discussion of the typical physical formats of these tales, *Nara ehon* and *emaki*, and a brief history of *iruimono* and plant symbolism in *otogi-zōshi* completes the chapter. Literary analysis of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi* in Chapter 2 focuses on the *irui* characters in each tale, describing their motivations and the effect they have on the humans they interact with. Format, plot, and character are compared and contrasted for each tale, and the textual sources are briefly described. Chapter 3 provides complete translations for *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi* with annotations for obscure words, puns, and meanings that may be unclear in the text. The chapter ends with a conclusion discussing aspects of the tales that might usefully be explored further.

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## CHAPTER 1

### OTOGI-ZŌSHI

#### Introduction

This thesis presents translations of two stories from the medieval Japanese short story genre known as *otogi-zōshi* 御伽草子 and a literary analysis of each story. The first, known in most versions as *Kazashi no himegimi* かざしの姫君, is the story of a young woman who is visited in secret by a mysterious man; after she becomes pregnant, he disappears and is revealed to be a chrysanthemum spirit. The second, *Sakuraume no sōshi* 桜梅草子, recounts two extraordinary romances centering on women and their attendants who turn out to be plants and writing accoutrements. I selected these tales because they both belong to the category known as *iruimono* 異類物, or tales of non-humans, and specifically because both deal with relationships between plants and humans; a subject which stands out in a category primarily made up of animal and object protagonists.

In Chapter 1 I examine the history and formation of *otogi-zōshi* from its beginnings in oral literature and its dissemination by itinerant nuns and priests. This examination also details problems in modern *otogi-zōshi* research, including the structure of the genre and its nomenclature. The most popular categorization system for *otogi-zōshi*, put forth by Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次, separates the stories in ways which are largely arbitrary, and the term itself is an anachronism that comes from an Edo-period anthology by Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門. Since then, other terms such as *Muromachi monogatari* 室町物語 have been created to better define the genre, but each term carries its own problems, and the result is a mix of terms that complicates research.

In Chapter 1 I will also discuss the two typical *otogi-zōshi* formats, *Nara ehon* and *emaki*, are also described and discussed. *Nara ehon* and *emaki* are the visual aspect of *otogi-zōshi* and help provide clues to who the audience and distributors of these stories might have been. While this thesis focuses on translation of the text of each tale, an examination of these formats is important for a more complete understanding of the genre. The chapter concludes with an examination of the *iruimono* category of *otogi-zōshi* and a brief history of *irui* characters and plant symbolism. A typically entertaining and lively category, *iruimono* tales are often satirical and treat an animal or object protagonist as though it were human. Plant *iruimono* are rare, and according to Ichiko Teiji, they are treated differently; romances involving plant *irui* characters often end badly, and the tales are melancholy rather than satirical. I will examine Ichiko's statements and how they apply to *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*.

In Chapter 2, I provide a literary analysis of the two stories under consideration, along with a brief summary of their textual histories. The literary analysis focuses on examining the *irui* (non-human) characters in these tales. Plant *irui* characters can be found in other genres such as Noh theater, but because of the uniqueness of *otogi-zōshi* that contain plant-based *irui* characters, I examine closely what aspects of the characters' motivations, actions, and nature might be due to their transformation from plants. I also examine the characteristics of the *irui* characters in each tale that set them apart from humans, and how these differences affect the humans with whom they interact. I also compare and contrast the format and structure of each tale in an effort to understand whether there is a typical way plant *irui* characters are treated, and how that might differ from the way other *irui* characters such as animals or objects are treated.

Chapter 3 offers complete, annotated translations of both stories. For *Kazashi no himegimi*, I have relied primarily upon the annotated edition by Ichiko Teiji from the *Muromachi monogatari shū* 室町物語集 section of the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系, which was based primarily on the Harvard Fogg Library manuscript. I also consulted the *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei hoi 1* 室町時代物語大成補遺一, also based on the Harvard Fogg Library manuscript, for comparison of notes and content. While the focus of this thesis is on the text of the tales, I used the Harvard Fogg Library *emaki* version available online to get a sense of the original format of the tale and its images. For *Sakuraume no sōshi*, I used an unannotated version from the *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei* 室町時代物語大成. This version is a copy of an original scroll which is now presumed lost, and so it lacks images. I had some additional help from summaries given in sources such as the *Otogi-zōshi jiten* 御伽草子事典 edited by Tokuda Kazuo 徳田和夫.

This intent of this thesis is to add translations to the growing body of works available for study in English and open up more avenues of research. Consequently, there are aspects of these stories that I have not had the chance to discuss in great detail. In my Conclusion I describe some possible directions for future research on these tales, including comparison to world mythology and analysis of religious themes. It is my hope that my translations will help facilitate a discussion of the role of plant *irui* characters in *otogi-zōshi* and in the broader context of Japanese culture and literary history.

### **The History and Development of Otogi-zōshi**

The idea of *otogi-zōshi* as a genre has been fraught with problems from the time the stories were incorporated into modern research. The term itself is an anachronism that



developed due to lack of awareness of the extent of the genre; originally, *otogi-zōshi* were thought to encompass only twenty-three stories from an Edo-period anthology. As more information and manuscripts surfaced, it became clear that the term was inadequate; but it was already entrenched in the research lexicon and as such remains the easiest and most common way to refer to the types of stories which fall under its broad umbrella. Scholars disagree on how many stories even fall into this genre, although a number somewhere between four and five hundred is common.

In its broadest and most common usage, the term *otogi-zōshi* refers to any number of short stories created in the medieval period. In terms of *otogi-zōshi* research, the “medieval period” refers to the Kamakura 鎌倉, Nanbokuchō 南北朝, Muromachi 室町, and early Tokugawa 徳川 periods. These stories were written on a wide range of subjects, and generally presented in the form of a *Nara ehon* 奈良絵本, a type of small-format book, although they can be presented in an *emaki* 絵巻 or scroll format as well. The lines defining this genre are incredibly vague; Virginia Skord says of it that “the term is generally applied to any brief prose narrative originating in the medieval period which cannot be clearly assigned to other genres,”<sup>1</sup> making it a definition of exclusion rather than a definition intended to indicate a shared background or style. The genre has been plagued throughout its history by the assumption that the stories are intended for an audience of women and children, giving rise to an elitism in modern research which suggests that these stories are not worthy of critical study. This elitism has partly been aided by the plot-driven nature and liveliness of these tales, which, as we shall see, owes much to their development from oral literature; this view was also heavily influenced

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<sup>1</sup> Skord, Virginia. “The Comic Consciousness in Medieval Japanese Narrative: Otogi-zōshi of Commoners.” Ph. D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1987, p. 3.

by the selection and advertisement of certain stories by the Edo period publisher Shibukawa Seiemon, whose contributions will be discussed in depth shortly.

Researchers such as Virginia Skord and Barbara Ruch have worked to dispel this literary elitism in English research, while Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次 and Ishikawa Tōru 石川透 have provided much valuable research in Japanese. Ichiko worked to understand *otogi-zōshi* as a genre by developing a complex classification system and attempting to define the edges of the genre. While somewhat cumbersome, it is the most popular classification system used in research today, referenced by researchers such as Skord, Ruch, and Donald Keene. Ishikawa has worked to further the acceptance of *otogi-zōshi* as a valuable source for cultural research. He has also written on the relationship of *otogi-zōshi* to the *Nara ehon* book format.

For a better understanding of what led to such an imprecisely defined genre, I would first like to examine the circumstances surrounding the development of the term *otogi-zōshi*. Around 1700, Shibukawa Seiemon 渋川清右衛門, a publisher from Osaka, printed an anthology called the *Otogi bunko* 御伽文庫 or *Shūgen otogi bunko* 祝言御伽文庫, known in English as *The Companion Library*. For the *Otogi bunko*, Shibukawa selected twenty-three medieval tales<sup>2</sup> and bound them into an anthology intended as a wedding gift to be read by women and children. Shibukawa's *Otogi bunko* sold very well; because of this and likely also because of its status as a wedding treasury, many copies survived into modern times. When it was rediscovered in modern Japanese research, and when the first modern English translations began appearing in the 1960s, it was treated as an isolated anthology. However, more stories began to surface with similar features to those included in the anthology. It soon became evident that researchers

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<sup>2</sup> Skord 1987, p.2 claims twenty-four stories; all other sources I have examined claim twenty-three, including Ruch 1971, p. 593. Skord's count should be considered a typographical error.

were dealing with much more than one anthology, and so an attempt was made to form these stories into a cohesive genre.

Because many copies of Shibukawa's anthology survived to the modern day, researchers based their assumptions about the entire genre based on his collection. Because the *Otogi bunko* had been hand-picked for women and children, all *otogi-zōshi*, they reasoned, had been intended for such an audience. They failed to take the circumstances of its printing into account. First, because Shibukawa put the *Otogi bunko* together long after *otogi-zōshi* first became popular, it is not an accurate representation of how they were originally received. Second, researchers did not consider that Shibukawa was biased by a desire to sell copies of the anthology, and therefore selected only the specific types of stories he thought would sell best. With the limited knowledge researchers had originally, it is understandable that they would not have considered these aspects of the creation of *otogi-zōshi*; however, few researchers reconsidered this position as new evidence arose. Edward Putzar's analysis of *The Tale of Monkey Genji* (*Sarugenji sōshi* 猿源氏草子) in 1963 contains some excellent analysis of the intended audience of *otogi-zōshi* and its importance as social satire. Despite this, Donald Keene's *Anthology of Japanese Literature* still refers to them as "nursery tales" and contains the opinion that "[*otogi-zōshi*] were for the most part children's stories of didactic intent, but sometimes they rose above the rather elementary level of the medium and became genuine literature."<sup>3</sup> We can see that the stigma stuck in English research; it did in Japan, as well, to the extent that even today fairy tales are known in Japanese as *otogi-zōshi* or *otogi-banashi* 御伽噺.

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<sup>3</sup> Keene, Donald. *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. New York, 1955, p. 322. While this was originally published in 1955, the copy I refer to is a reprint published after 1990 and this opinion has not been revised. Due to the accessibility and concision of this anthology, it is frequently used in classrooms and thus perpetuates the idea of literary elitism that plagues *otogi-zōshi*.

Modern researchers have had to work against this literary elitism, and have had some success. Virginia Skord translated several stories in *Tales of Tears and Laughter*, and researchers such as Keller Kimbrough and Frederick Kavanagh have examined the genre from a religious perspective. Possibly the most important modern research, however, is Barbara Ruch's exploration of the history and development of *otogi-zōshi*, which provided a solid foundation for the field and made a persuasive argument against literary elitism.

In an effort to distance *otogi-zōshi* from this stigma and better define the genre, Ichiko Teiji coined several new terms; among them are *Muromachi monogatari*室町物語, *chūsei monogatari*中世物語, and *chūsei shōsetsu*中世小説.<sup>4</sup> However, these terms only confuse the matter. As researchers pick and choose which term they feel is best, any search for information is rendered that much more difficult, while these coined terms fail to provide any clear benefit to our understanding of the genre as a whole. Virginia Skord has much to say about the problems with genre and terminology in her dissertation, "The Comic Consciousness in Medieval Japanese Narrative: The Otogi-zōshi of Commoners." In her opinion, "... to be truly useful, a generic definition must meet three criteria: it must be synchronic, literary, and abstract."<sup>5</sup> One of her major arguments against popular terminology is that many terms, such as *Muromachi monogatari*, refer to a time period rather than any kind of literary trend. Skord prefers one of Ichiko's other terms, *monogatari sōshi*物語草子, because it is an indication of literary form and combines the idea of the older, longer *monogatari* format with the newer, shorter *sōshi* format. According to Skord, *sōshi* originally meant "random jottings;" this definition would make it quite

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<sup>4</sup> Skord 1987, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

applicable to a genre with such a wide range of plots and themes.<sup>6</sup> While she feels this description is more accurate and useful than that of current popular terminology, she admits that the term *otogi-zōshi* is so ingrained in research that it is unlikely to be replaced.

However, all of these terms, even Skord's *monogatari sōshi* and the term *otogi-zōshi* itself, are anachronistic and fail to define the genre in a meaningful way. Because of this lack of definition, several researchers have tried to organize the broad range of *otogi-zōshi* topics by devising a system of subgenres. The most widely used system, though somewhat cumbersome, is Ichiko Teiji's classification system. Ichiko splits *otogi-zōshi* into six major subgenres, each of which is further divided into smaller subgenres. The major subgenres are tales of aristocrats, warriors, commoners, priests, foreign countries, and non-humans (*iruimono* 異類物). While this system is a helpful starting point, Virginia Skord points out that Ichiko's labels are inconsistent. He creates categories based on social class (aristocrats, warriors), religion, and geography; these are unrelated labels that do not make sense for literary analysis, and thus are dangerous to rely upon.<sup>7</sup> For instance, the *iruimono* or non-human subgenre contains tales that are vastly different in narrative style, and yet they fall under the same heading simply because there is a major character who is not human. However, as long as one keeps in mind that these stories are complex and one story can often fit under multiple subgenres, Ichiko's system can be a good place to begin.

Next I would like to turn from a discussion of genre and terminology problems to discuss two major theories on the influences of the genre's development. The first theory, held by researchers such as Haruo Shirane, is that *otogi-zōshi* were a combination of the *setsuwa* 説話

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Skord 1987, p. 11.

and *monogatari* 物語 genres.<sup>8</sup> Shirane extends this idea even farther, suggesting that *otogi-zōshi* are in fact a melting pot of many literary forms; however, he stresses viewing them as a gap-bridging genre between Heian *monogatari* and Tokugawa period *kana-zōshi* 仮名草子 and *ukiyo-zōshi* 浮世草子. As for the reason behind their development, Shirane subscribes to the commonly-held theory that popular literature developed as a byproduct of the idea of *gekokujō* 下克上 or “the lower overthrowing the upper.” He points to newly-risen daimyo as the consumers of the lavishly decorated *ehon* and *emaki* on which many *otogi-zōshi* were written, using the plot theme in which *otogi-zōshi* characters improve their status as his primary evidence. According to this theory, the stories were likely written as “popular digests of the classics” to help the newly rich acquire the traditional classical education they had not had the means to acquire before. Shirane explains that they provided “a means of enjoying formerly aristocratic mores without the necessity of requiring a formal education.”<sup>9</sup> The didactic nature of these stories, frequently ending in auspicious phrases or moral assertions (as we shall see in *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*) is the evidence supporting this claim.

Shirane’s argument for the importance of *setsuwa* is important to *otogi-zōshi* development, and is reinforced by the opinions of Virginia Skord in her dissertation. However, her research and the work of Barbara Ruch casts some doubt on his other assertions. The question of audience in particular is very tricky, and something that Ruch explores in great depth. According to her, Shirane’s theory is likely based on the theories of Hayashiya Tatsusaburō 林屋辰三郎, who viewed all of Muromachi culture as primarily a creation of the

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<sup>8</sup> *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, ed. Haruo Shirane. Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 1098.

<sup>9</sup> Shirane 2007, p. 1098.

new *machishū* class; this is a theory which is quite popular in English research. It seems that to Ruch, the effect of the *machishū* on popular literature has largely been overstated. As for “popular digests,” while some stories are based on earlier tales, I feel it is much more likely that this is because of their roots in oral literature than because *otogi-zōshi* were used as educational materials. Based on their roots in traveling priests’ and nuns’ recitations, the reason for the stories’ auspicious endings is more likely to be because of their development as a kind of charm or *omamori* than because they were a reflection of *gekokujō* culture.

Here I would like to consider Ruch’s research and counterargument in more depth. She believes that the popular literature of the Muromachi period was “not an outgrowth of the fading Heian monogatari tradition; it was a new type of literary art fashioned by medieval religio-secular jongleurs.”<sup>10</sup> In particular, she dismisses the view shared by Shirane and other researchers that the increase in literary activity in the Muromachi period was due to the increased presence and affluence of the *machishū* 町衆 or townsman class, and hence the *gekokujō* phenomenon. Where authorship can be determined (there is only one story for which this is the case) or can be reasonably surmised, the authors were generally priests or traveling performers (her “medieval jongleurs”).<sup>11</sup> Frederick Kavanagh supports Ruch’s view; he notes that eleven stories from a compilation produced by the Agui monks of Mt. Hiei have been shown to be clearly related to specific *otogi-zōshi*.<sup>12</sup> When it comes to the audience of these tales, Ruch also dismisses the idea that they were originally aimed at women and children. She

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<sup>10</sup> Ruch, Barbara. “Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature”, in John W. Hall & Toyoda Takeshi, eds., *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, pp. 279-309. University of California Press, 1977, p. 281.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>12</sup> Kavanagh, Frederick G. “An Errant Priest: Sasayaki Take.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 51:2 (1996), p. 220.

presents some evidence about the likely audience of these stories, noting a diary entry in which a woman requested that her husband transcribe a particular *otogi-zōshi* because the Chinese characters were difficult. Ruch mentions that there are a number of *otogi-zōshi* manuscripts which employ many of these difficult characters; this is then an indicator that the original audience likely included, and may have been primarily comprised of, males.<sup>13</sup>

In stories of upward mobility, which Shirane and Hayashiya would consider evidence of the hopes and aspirations of the newly rich, it turns out that upon closer examination the heroes of these stories often do not attain success because of their own means or because of their social class. Rather, they frequently attain success because of their status as *mōshigo* 申子, or children bestowed by the gods. These children are often granted to pious parents who are unable to have their own. In the *otogi-zōshi Sasayaki take* ささやき竹, for example, two parents pray to Bishamon 毘沙門, the patron deity of northern Kyoto's Kurama temple 鞍馬寺, and are granted a daughter of surpassing beauty and accomplishment who marries the chief advisor, even succeeding in charming his two previous wives.<sup>14</sup> We can see the importance of the religious aspect of the *mōshigo* in the auspicious ending of the tale: "Bishamon instilled in the chief advisor a most unusual longing so that, deeply in love as he was, he would bring the couple's daughter to the lofty estate she came to enjoy in the end. All this is a blessed instance of heavenly favors realized through earthly means."<sup>15</sup> It is not through the daughter's own efforts, but rather through the intervention of the gods that she is able to raise her station. Thus, rather than expressing a message of reward for hard work or social mobility, these stories

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<sup>13</sup> Ruch, Barbara. "Origins of The Companion Library: An Anthology of Medieval Japanese Stories." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (May, 1971), p. 596.

<sup>14</sup> Kavanagh 1996.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.



express a religious message. Barbara Ruch explains, “Even in that curious genre *irui monogatari* that centers on animals, birds, or other *irui* (nonhumans), almost all the upwardly mobile *irui* marriages (i.e., an animal marries into a human family) end in failure, in the taking of the tonsure, and in salvation.”<sup>16</sup> I do not believe that either of the *otogi-zōshi* I have translated for this paper emphasizes upward mobility, but the relationship in *Kazashi no himegimi* ends with the deaths of both characters, and Himegimi shows great concern for her own spiritual well-being throughout the tale. Ruch goes on to say that “In short, the main agent in medieval fiction is fate, not ambition; the essential core of Muromachi literature is restoration of the proper world order, not *gekoku-jō*.”<sup>17</sup>

According to Ruch’s research, the particular characteristics of *otogi-zōshi* that are often misinterpreted as the result of the *gekoku-jō* phenomenon and the rise of the *machishū* are actually the lingering evidence of the genre’s development from what she calls “vocal literature” (*onsei bungaku* 音声文学).<sup>18</sup> According to her, all the new forms of literature developed in the medieval period had a vocal component. Performers added sounds by means of voice or instrument, and sometimes choreography and props. However, despite vocal embellishments, Ruch takes care to emphasize that vocal literature was always based in a text; this helps to distinguish it from oral literature (*kōshō bungaku* 口承文学, *denshō bungaku* 伝承文学) in which illiteracy is assumed. Two specific types of vocal literature performers were key to the development of medieval literature; first were *etoki* 絵解き (or *etoki hōshi* 絵解法師), who used texts or paintings as visual props, and second were the male *biwa hōshi* 琵琶法師 and female

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<sup>16</sup> Ruch 1971, pp. 283-4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

*goze* 瞽女, blind minstrels who built up a repertory of stories based on the Genpei wars (1180-1185).<sup>19</sup>

Ruch credits the *Kumano bikuni* 熊野比丘尼, itinerant nuns of Kumano and a female type of *etoki hōshi*, for the important act of familiarizing the Japanese populace with books, saying that “More than any other factor prior to the commercialization of printing in the Edo period, the proselytizing of the *Kumano bikuni* put books into the hands of Japanese on all levels of society everywhere in the land.”<sup>20</sup> *Kumano bikuni* as a group were likely first associated with the religious center at Kumano, but over time the term came to refer to women who were traveling entertainers.<sup>21</sup> Together with *etoki hōshi*, they also helped build up a repertoire of works that contributed to what Ruch calls a “national literature.” They also contributed to the idea of the book as a talisman. Originally, *etoki hōshi* and *Kumano bikuni* were associated with temples; some may have been based at a specific temple, and others traveled to give readings and performances. As time went on, fewer were based at a specific temple, and yet their association with temples remained in people’s minds. Because of this religious aspect, Ruch posits that *Kumano bikuni* and other itinerant priests may have handed out books in the manner of talismans, much like the Shinto shrine amulets *ofuda* お札 and *omamori* お守り today.<sup>22</sup> As temples gradually came upon financial distress, *etoki hōshi* and *Kumano bikuni* became a more secular position, but they continued to be viewed as having religious authority. Thus, the books they handed out may have continued to act as *omamori* even though their connection to any

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<sup>19</sup> Ruch 1977, p. 288.

<sup>20</sup> Ruch 1977, p. 302.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

real religious authority was questionable. This serves as another explanation for the hortatory nature of *otogi-zōshi*, and many were likely mass-produced for this purpose.

As I mentioned earlier, all *otogi-zōshi* save one are anonymous. The one author we have information on is Ishii Yasunaga 石井康長, known by his Buddhist name Ihō 彝鳳, a samurai who wrote *Hikketsu no monogatari* 筆結物語 in 1480 after becoming a priest.<sup>23</sup> His involvement indicates that some of the tales may have been written by individuals rather than groups, but no other information remains. The most compelling reason for this anonymity is the fact that they were likely written or distributed by traveling priests and nuns; according to Ruch, “All share the basic anonymity that is the almost inevitable characteristic of works produced by, or at least carried by, itinerant jongleurs.”<sup>24</sup>

As we can see, the concept of *otogi-zōshi* as a genre is still not perfect. Current definitions are vague, and their history is full of challenges based on its roots in oral literature. Next I would like to discuss another genre that is fraught with problems similar to those of *otogi-zōshi*.

### **Nara Ehon and Small Scrolls**

Most *otogi-zōshi* are presented in a *Nara ehon* format, and so this genre warrants a brief discussion here even though *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi* were both done in the small-scroll format. *Nara ehon* as a genre is plagued by the same types of problems that make *otogi-zōshi* research so difficult. What constitutes a *Nara ehon* is unclear: usually, the definition contains the phrase “most contain *otogi-zōshi*” in the same way that *otogi-zōshi*

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<sup>23</sup> Ruch 1971, p. 595.

<sup>24</sup> Ruch 1977, p. 308.

definitions often include something to the effect of “they are often found in *Nara ehon* format.” *Nara ehon* are small booklets, and they generally fall into one of three size categories. They are often richly illustrated, and as the common definition states, often contain *otogi-zōshi* or other short folktales. However, *Nara ehon* can sometimes contain other types of stories, can lack much illustration or can have illustrations in black and white, and in some circumstances the word could even be used to describe a small scroll. In other words, the term “*Nara ehon*” is often applied less because of distinct genre boundaries and more because it “feels” like a *Nara ehon* to a particular researcher. However, the three specific size formats do, I believe, provide slightly clearer boundaries than the boundaries of *otogi-zōshi*.

The most important thing to consider is that both of the stories under consideration here were intended to be illustrated. The unfortunate downside of working with transcriptions and photocopies is that the richness of the original illustrations is not apparent. For *Kazashi no himegimi*, I have used a transcription of the handscroll with photocopied illustrations, and for *Sakuraume no sōshi*, I have used a transcription with no illustrations. The images are, however, important; I hope in further research to work more closely with text and image to create a more holistic view of these works. However, the images for *Sakuraume no sōshi* are presumed lost and I can only access *Kazashi no himegimi* to a limited extent, which means that there is an aspect of the story that I will not be able to analyze. In future research, I would ideally be able to examine the images for both stories. In the case of *Kazashi no himegimi*, the text stands well on its own; however, with *Sakuraume no sōshi*, there are some awkward gaps in the text that make me suspect that the images would help supply meaning. Despite this, I think that my analysis of the text of both tales will help increase our understanding of the role of plants in *iruimono* tales, and the role of *irui* characters in general.

The format of each of these stories was originally the small scroll or *ko-e* 小絵. These scrolls were approximately half the size of previous *emaki*, or around ten to fifteen centimeters in height. However, Melissa McCormick points out that small scrolls should not be interpreted simply as small versions of the larger *emaki*; the small scroll developed its own unique ways of incorporating images rather than following *emaki* tradition.<sup>25</sup> These small scrolls had a tendency to portray interactions between characters; an example of this interaction can be seen in the pictures of *Kazashi no himegimi*, in which several images portray the highly emotional interactions between Himegimi and the Lesser Captain.

Supporting Barbara Ruch's discussion of the oral and communal origins of *otogi-zōshi*, McCormick indicates that originally, the reading of handscrolls (*emaki* 絵巻) was likely a group event. However, the introduction of the small scroll changed this tradition. These small scrolls were produced over a span of about one hundred years between the mid-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries, and were most often produced for aristocrats living in Kyoto.<sup>26</sup> According to McCormick, these small scrolls were intended for a single viewer and thus were highly customized in a way that previous handscrolls were not. Thanks to the patronage of the Ashikaga shoguns, the small scroll flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup>

McCormick describes the tales often depicted in the small scroll format: they often had a narrow focus on a single protagonist and a clear storyline. This type of story differed from stories depicted on previous handscrolls, which were more likely to have many subplots and various characters. McCormick also explains that "a close reading of the texts of small scrolls

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<sup>25</sup> McCormick, Melissa. *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan*. University of Washington Press, 2009, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

reveals that much of what is enabled by the paintings is already latent in the text.”<sup>28</sup> What this indicates is that, while it is unfortunate that the images for *Sakuraume no sōshi* are likely lost, a close reading of the text is likely to supply most of the information necessary for comprehension of the story. However, she also explains that, while the previous handscroll tradition used pictures to emphasize certain elements of the text, the images in a small scroll sought to add layers of meaning to what was expressed. In future research, I would like to examine this argument through a closer examination of *Kazashi no himegimi* to produce a more holistic analysis of the story.

Finally, McCormick makes the same argument for the small format handscroll that scholars are increasingly making for *otogi-zōshi*. She explains that small scrolls “were thought to lack the art historical gravitas that merited in-depth analysis,” and that “Umezu [Jiro] famously designated them as ‘playthings for women and children,’ effectively banishing small scrolls from the domain of serious art.” Her book is an attempt to correct this misconception.<sup>29</sup> Works such as McCormick’s seem to me to be working to correct preconceived notions about genre; it is my hope that this continues to be an overall trend, and that *otogi-zōshi* research will also benefit from it.

Before analyzing *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*, I would like to discuss the subgenre of *otogi-zōshi* known as *iruimono* and the idea of plant and human relationships.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> McCormick 2009, p. 45.

### Iruimono and Plant Symbolism

The problems with the classification of *otogi-zōshi* as a whole can be seen in microcosm in the problems classifying the subgenre of *iruimono*. As stated earlier, *iruimono* is a subgenre which deals with “non-humans,” but there are different kinds of “non-humans” and they are dealt with in various ways. This means that the subgenre does not have the cohesion one might expect. Doi Hiroko has one very detailed article which outlines the various ways in which researchers have attempted to solve this problem and gives a classification system of her own.

What distinguishes Doi’s classification system from Ichiko Teiji’s is that it splits the stories not by the type of plot, but by how the *irui* character itself is portrayed. She chooses to categorize the stories by whether the *irui* is an anthropomorphized animal or object, or whether the *irui* character transforms into a human in order to have a relationship or interact with humans. The two *otogi-zōshi* I have translated for this paper both fall under Doi’s second category. Prior classification systems, such as the one espoused by Ichiko Teiji, often split the stories up by theme. For instance, under the *iruimono* subgenre there might be aristocratic *irui* tales, or *irui* war tales, or *irui* poetry competitions. This is, like Ichiko’s classifications of *otogi-zōshi* in general, useful as a starting point, but Doi’s system is more helpful from the perspective of literary analysis.

The particular name for stories in which *irui* characters transform into humans in order to have relationships with humans is *iruikaikondan* 異類怪婚談, or “tales of supernatural marriages.” Interestingly, a similar term is also used in *setsuwa* 説話: *iruikon setsuwa* 異類婚説話. What this shows is that the idea of *iruimono* as a subgenre should perhaps be reconsidered; rather than looking at it as a specific aspect of *otogi-zōshi* or *setsuwa*, it might be useful to look

at the phenomenon on its own terms. It seems that in Japanese research it is not as specific a term as it is usually treated in English research. The *Jōdai setsuwa jiten* 上代説話事典, for example, even uses the term *iruikon setsuwa* to refer to stories from other nations, and specifically references a story from Australia.<sup>30</sup>

Haruo Shirane makes interesting observations about the role of nature in Japanese culture and its particular relevance to stories of plant *irui* characters in his book *Japan and the Four Seasons*. He refers to the highly aestheticized, re-created nature of gardens and art as “secondary nature,” and explains that it was viewed as an extension of the human world, rather than being opposed to it.<sup>31</sup>

Shirane also discusses the prevalence of plant *irui* characters in Noh theater (*nō* 能). While many of the plays including plant characters derive from seasonal *waka* topics, he notes that unlike in *waka*, the focus in Noh plays was on the spirit of the plants. These plants were often portrayed in a Buddhist manner, struggling between attachment to the world and salvation.<sup>32</sup> Shirane compares this theme of struggle to *otogi-zōshi*: “These plays, like many of the *otogi-zōshi* of the time, view the world from the perspective of plants or animals that are sacrificed and that suffer, usually at the hands of human beings.”<sup>33</sup> This point is particularly relevant to *Kazashi no himegimi*, in which the chrysanthemum spirit’s flowers are cut by the Middle Counselor in order to be presented to the Emperor.

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<sup>30</sup> “Iruikon setsuwa” 異類婚説話. In *Jōdai setsuwa jiten* 上代説話事典, eds. Ōkuma Kiichirō 大久間喜一郎 and Inui Katsumi 乾克己. Yūzankaku shuppansha, 1993, pp. 365-8.

<sup>31</sup> Shirane, Haruo. *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*. Columbia University Press, 2012, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Shirane 2012, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



Shirane makes observations about plum and cherry trees as well, which are the subject of the first half of *Sakuraume no sōshi*. The plum blossom and cherry blossom were both considered spring flowers, and were also closely associated with love. The plum flowered first, and the cherry next, creating a temporal and seasonal relationship between the two female protagonists in the first half of *Sakuraume no sōshi*. Heian tradition was to bring themselves closer to nature by wearing colors to create Shirane's concept of secondary nature. If Shirane's statement about secondary nature as an extension of the human world is correct, then the representations of flowers as human may have been an attempt to become closer to nature. There may have been an acknowledgement that the secondary nature Heian aristocrats were exposed to was highly refined and conventionalized, and hence distanced from nature in its untamed state. However, these stories were written after Heian times. Shirane notes that the development of *karesansui* 枯山水 (dry landscape gardens) in the Muromachi period meant that flowers were not used as much in gardens, but were moved indoors into visual arts such as ikebana and paintings. Presumably this would have exacerbated the perceived distance between primary and secondary nature, and made it an equally relevant topic in the medieval period.

There is also a history of poetic associations linked to the plum blossom and the cherry blossom, and they changed over time. In the *Man'yōshū*, for example, the plum blossom was so inextricably linked to the idea of spring that the use of the general term for flower, *hana* 花, was often used as a reference to the plum blossom specifically. By the Heian period, however, the general term *hana* was far more likely to refer to the cherry blossom. Noting this close history between the two flowers, and the cherry's usurpation of the plum, we may be able to read *Sakuraume no sōshi* another way. It may be that the first half of *Sakuraume no sōshi* is

attempting to give a more physical interpretation of the competition between the flowers in a way that a medieval audience versed in poetry might have recognized and appreciated. The story primarily focuses on the main character's wonder at the supernatural goings-on; this interpretation could also add a touch of humor.

Regarding the chrysanthemum, the flower of the *irui* character from *Kazashi no himegimi*, it is interesting to note that it was viewed in the Heian period as being associated with the Imperial house, purity, and immortality.<sup>34</sup> It was also one of the primary poetic associations of autumn, as it was in Chinese tradition; as Haruo Shirane explains, in the Heian period “the chrysanthemum became the most prominent autumn flower in Japanese poetry.”<sup>35</sup> In China it was considered to have a connection to long life; at the annual Chrysanthemum festival or *chōyō* 重陽, drinking wine made from the flower was thought to help achieve longevity. One cannot help but notice the irony in the fact that Himegimi, by associating with a chrysanthemum spirit, instead has her life cut short. The close link between these stories and poetry may help explain why they are so emotional, to the extent that Ichiko Teiji commented upon the melancholy nature of plant and human marriages.<sup>36</sup>

Shirane notes that in the medieval period, *haikai* 俳諧 and *kyōka* 狂歌 played a role in vulgarizing classical poetic associations such as the cherry blossom and the plum.<sup>37</sup> It might be tempting to attribute this idea to these stories, particularly since *otogi-zōshi* have a reputation for being humorous and satirical; however, in the two stories translated here the relationships are treated seriously. In *Sakuraume no sōshi*, it is not unthinkable that on one level, the author

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<sup>34</sup> Shirane 2012, p. 151.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次. “Kazashi no himegimi” かざしの姫君. In vol. 1 of *Muromachi monogatari shū* 室町物語集, pp. 292-309. Iwanami Shoten, 1989., p. 292.

<sup>37</sup> Shirane 2012, pp. 211-12.

or authors may intend to subvert these poetic associations, but if so they are not doing it in an overtly parodic way. Instead, the reader is invited to sympathize with the *irui* characters in these stories, particularly in the case of the chrysanthemum spirit and the two spirits of flowering trees.

By contextualizing the stories in their textual histories, I hope to provide a firmly grounded literary analysis of the characters and plot in each tale.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERARY ANALYSIS

#### Kazashi no himegimi

*Kazashi no himegimi* かざしの姫君 or *Kazashi no hime* かざしの姫 survives in five manuscripts and five typeset (katsuji 活字) editions. Most editions can be found through a search of The Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books. There is a National Diet Library manuscript in *Nara ehon* format with a stamp indicating that it used to belong to Sakakibara Yoshino 榊原芳埜 (1832-1881). This manuscript is available online in a catalogue of Sakakibara's book collection, *Sakakibara Yoshino zōsho mokuroku* 榊原芳埜家蔵書目録.<sup>38</sup> There is also a digital manuscript available from Keiō University's *Sekai no dejitaru nara ehon dētabēsu* 世界のデジタル奈良絵本データベース.<sup>39</sup> This manuscript is also in *Nara ehon* format. Another manuscript in *Nara ehon* format belongs to Miyagi Prefectural Library; this copy is missing its cover and two pages of text.<sup>40</sup> There is mention of a fourth manuscript in the *Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系, but it is not listed in the Union Catalogue. This manuscript belonged to the private collection of Ono Hisashi 小野幸 (1912-?), who seems to have acquired it from the *Kōbai bunko* 紅梅文庫 collection of Maeda Yoshiko 前田善子 (1910-?).<sup>41</sup> This

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<sup>38</sup> *Kazashi no hime* かざしの姫 Available online at the National Diet Library Digital Database 国会図書館デジタル資料 <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1288431>. Viewed 18 June 2013.

<sup>39</sup> *Kazashi no hime* かざしの姫 Available on the Keiō University *Sekai no nara ehon dejitaru dētabēsu* 世界の奈良絵本データベース <http://dbs.humi.keio.ac.jp/naraehon/ehon/detail.asp?frame=True&id=KL016&volume=1>. Viewed 18 June 2013..

<sup>40</sup> *Kazashi no himegimi* かざしの姫 Available on the Miyagi Prefectural Library Website 宮城県図書館 <http://www.library.pref.miyagi.jp/kotobanoumi/pdf/0504.pdf>. Viewed 18 June 2013.

<sup>41</sup> "Maeda Yoshiko" 前田善子. Posted on Sanbiki no mayoeru hitsujitachi 三匹の迷える羊たち Blog, [http://blog.livedoor.jp/sheep\\_tmc/archives/50441986.html](http://blog.livedoor.jp/sheep_tmc/archives/50441986.html). Viewed 18 June 2013..

manuscript is also presumably a *Nara ehon*, as Ono Hisashi's collection contained many of them. One other publicly known manuscript is the Harvard Fogg Library manuscript in the small scroll or *ko-e* 小絵 format. This manuscript is also not listed in the Union Catalogue, but it seems to be a very popular one because of its vivid pictures; it has been featured in *Zaigai Nara Ehon* and *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan*, and it formed the basis for the typeset edition by Ichiko Teiji I have used for my translation.<sup>42</sup> This particular manuscript is known under the alternate title *Kiku no sei monogatari* 菊の精物語 found on a slip of paper in the postscript which bears this title, though this title nets no results in the Union Catalogue.<sup>43</sup> This scroll is attributed to Tosa Yukihide 土佐行秀 (dates unknown), a painter from the Muromachi period.<sup>44</sup>

*Kazashi no himegimi* is available in five typeset editions. There is one in *Shinpen otogi-zōshi* 新編御伽草子.<sup>45</sup> The manuscript used for this edition was likely lost when the collection was passed down to libraries in Tokushima.<sup>46</sup> For further research, it would be useful to compare this typeset edition to the other manuscripts; however, Ichiko Teiji mentions that there

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<sup>42</sup> *Zaigai Nara ehon* 海外蔵書 海所蔵書集 Kodansha, 1979, McCormick, Melissa. *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan*. University of Washington Press, 2009, and Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次. "Kazashi no himegimi" かざしの姫君. In vol. 1 of *Muromachi monogatari shū* 室町物語集, pp. 292-309. Iwanami Shoten, 1989, respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Ichiko 1989, p. 292.

<sup>44</sup> "Illustrated Story of the Spirit of a Chrysanthemum." Posted on the Harvard Art Museums Website, <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/211411>. Viewed 20 June 2013.

<sup>45</sup> *Kazashi no himegimi* かざしの姫 In *Shinpen otogi-zōshi* 新編御伽草子 ed. Hagino Yoshiyuki 穂由之 誠堂書店 誠堂書店 1901. Available online at the National Diet Library Kindai Digital Database 近代デジタルライブラリー, <http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/992342/49>. Viewed 18 June 2013.

<sup>46</sup> The collection originally belonged to Yashiro Hirokata 屋代弘賢 (1751-1841), then passed into the collection of Hachisuka Narimasa 蜂須賀斉昌 (1795-1859) and became part of his Awanokuni bunko 阿波国文庫 collection before being passed on to libraries in Tokushima. What remains is now part of the Tokushima Prefectural Library 徳島県立図書館 collection. For current information on Tokushima Prefectural Library's remaining holdings, see Tokushima 2013.

are some omissions in this version, and there are also no illustrations.<sup>47</sup> The next typeset edition is from the *otogi-zōshi* section of volume 19 of the *Nihon bungaku taikai* 日本文学大系. The introduction suggests that, although several sources are listed, the typeset edition from *Shinpen otogi-zōshi* was likely used as the main text rather than one of the manuscripts. No illustrations accompany this text. There is also a typeset edition available in *Shinshaku nihon bungaku sōsho* 新釈日本文学叢書. As mentioned before, *Zaigai Nara ehon* uses the Harvard Fogg Manuscript as its primary source; this edition includes reproductions of some of the illustrations from that scroll.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the typeset edition used for this translation, as mentioned above, is Ichiko Teiji's transcription of the Harvard Fogg manuscript from the *Muromachi monogatari shū jō* 室町物語集上, volume 54 of the *Shin nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系.<sup>49</sup>

Images from the Harvard Fogg manuscript are available in Ichiko's transcription; however, they are all in grayscale so some of the impact and aesthetic value of the original scroll is lost. Other sources for the images are Harvard's website and Keio University's Sekai no Nara Ehon database.<sup>50</sup> At the time of this thesis, the images on both websites are available only as thumbnails. While an in-depth, holistic analysis of both pictures and text would be very useful for these stories and for *otogi-zōshi* as a whole, neither *Kazashi no himegimi* nor *Sakuraume no sōshi* have images that are easily available in a format that would enable such close examination. In the case of *Sakuraume no sōshi*, the images have been lost entirely. For the purpose of this thesis, I will examine only the literary content of each text.

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<sup>47</sup> Ichiko 1989, p. 292.

<sup>48</sup> Zaigai Nara ehon 1979.

<sup>49</sup> Ichiko 1989.

<sup>50</sup> HUAM 2013 and Keio 2013.

*Kazashi no himegimi* is the tale of a young girl who is visited by a mysterious man. Over time, she discovers that he is in fact a chrysanthemum spirit. They have a secret relationship, whereupon he disappears, leaving her with a wrapped lock of hair and a child inside her. Himegimi realizes that he was a chrysanthemum spirit, and that his chrysanthemums were cut when her father the Middle Counselor was asked to present them to the Emperor. Himegimi becomes depressed, and dies shortly after giving birth. Her child then grows up to become a favorite of the Emperor, and the story ends auspiciously.

*Kazashi no himegimi* was written in emulation of the Heian *monogatari* tradition, and the narrative is relatively long compared to other *otogi-zōshi*. The setting seems to be Heian Japan, as the various characters have appropriate Heian court ranks, and are described as fitting traditional Heian ideals of beauty. Himegimi is introduced as a typical Heian princess, cloistered from the world and at the height of her beauty—which in Heian terms is right around Himegimi's fourteen years. The Lesser Captain, the chrysanthemum spirit in his human form, is described as being the classical Heian aristocrat; with blackened teeth and penciled-in eyebrows, his appearance is typical of Heian fashion. In the story he is compared to Prince Genji and Narihira, who were popular courtiers in Heian literature. The story also contains several poems and spends much time portraying the emotions of the main characters.

The Heian setting helps set the expectations of the reader. The reader, rather than expecting a fast-paced story, will understand through these references that this story is intended to be descriptive and affective. However, there are still anachronisms hinting that this is, in fact, a medieval tale. The most obvious moment is when the Lesser Captain talks about the child Himegimi is pregnant with. He uses the phrase *tainai ni mo midoriko wo nokoshi okeba* 胎内にもみどり子を残り置けば. The word *tainai* refers to a woman's womb, and is a shockingly

straightforward word. Such a word would not be found in a Heian text; if that idea had to be expressed, it would likely have been done through an allusion or metaphor. Thus this text's medieval origin is revealed.

Early in the story, Himegimi is visited by a mysterious man. When pressed for a name, tells her to call him the Lesser Captain. He is dressed in Heian court fashion, and thus appears to be a young aristocrat, but where he comes from and precisely who he is remains an enigma. Despite his secrecy, Himegimi trusts in his aristocratic appearance and has relations with him, and he continues his secret visits. Later, it will be revealed that he is the spirit of one of the chrysanthemums Himegimi so admires in her garden.

As described in Chapter 1, the chrysanthemum has a long history in Japanese and Chinese symbolism. In China, the Chrysanthemum was a symbol of autumn, and the ninth moon of the year was known as the Chrysanthemum Month.<sup>51</sup> In that month people would hold events to view the chrysanthemums and attend a small reception where they would eat traditional foods.<sup>52</sup> Yagi Ikuko describes the history of chrysanthemums in her analysis of *Kazashi no himegimi*, and claims that it is likely that in Heian times chrysanthemums were cultivated as a medicinal plant all over Japan.<sup>53</sup> She also notes that in literary history, references to the chrysanthemum first appear in the *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻 (751), not appearing in major works such as the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712), *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), or *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (ca.759). She uses this to suggest that the flower was imported from China sometime in the middle of the

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<sup>51</sup> Williams, C.A.S. *Encyclopedia of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives*. New York: The Julian Press, 1960, p. 327.

<sup>52</sup> Williams 1960, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> Yagi Ikuko 八木幾子. "Kazashi no himegimi no miryoku: kiku no sei no hassō wo chūshin ni" 「かざしの姫君」の魅力—菊の精の発想を中心に. *Nihon bungeigaku* 日本文芸学 37 (2001), p. 103.



eighth century, bringing with it its already well-established association with longevity. From that time, the chrysanthemum appeared in various poetry anthologies, and was associated with longevity, purity, and the imperial house. However, it is also important to note that the chrysanthemums in this story are specifically white chrysanthemums or *shiragiku* 白菊, which carry additional meaning. Yagi explains that white chrysanthemums were particularly prized, and were often compared to stars, frost, or white sand in poetry. They were also known for turning purple in the fall, and they were likely only at their peak bloom for a short period of time. Perhaps influenced by this, the fading of white chrysanthemums was associated with the fading of people's hearts and the passage of time.

Yagi Ikuko argues that the appearance of the Lesser Captain signals the beginning of Himegimi's fantasy.<sup>54</sup> According to Yagi, Himegimi's love for the chrysanthemums is in fact a hint to the reader that what follows is her imaginings; that in her head, she translates her love for the plant into a fantasy of romantic love. Yagi's argument is supported by the opening of the tale and the fact that Himegimi is described as having dozed off just before the Lesser Captain first appears. However, while Yagi claims that the chrysanthemum spirit's death ends the fantasy portion of the tale, the problem remains that Himegimi is pregnant. Yagi states that reality has been affected by Himegimi's imaginings, but I am not satisfied with this explanation. I would argue that Himegimi's pregnancy suggests that a more literal reading of the tale is intended. Yagi's theory is a very interesting look at possible psychological readings of the tale, and possibly something that a close and contemplative reader of the time might have considered. However, because it is so difficult to determine what might have been part of Himegimi's fantasy and what was part of her reality, I believe that the reader is intended to

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<sup>54</sup> Yagi 2001, p. 107.

suspend disbelief and treat the tale as though Himegimi was in reality visited by a chrysanthemum spirit.

However, this much of Yagi's psychological explanation should be quite clear to the reader: it is Himegimi's emotions that cause the chrysanthemum spirit to appear. We learn in the beginning of the story that Himegimi loves chrysanthemums and is depressed each year when they must wither and die. The story does not make the connection explicit, but the timing of his appearance indicates that her depth of emotion allows the chrysanthemum to take a human form. This is also supported by the ending of *Sakuraume no sōshi*, which explicitly credits overwhelming emotion for the transformations of plant and writing utensil *irui*. I believe that this conclusion could easily be applied to *Kazashi no Himegimi* as well.

There are also allusions in the text which intensify the connections between Himegimi's emotions and the appearance of the Lesser Captain. For example, when Himegimi expresses her doubt and frustration at the Lesser Captain leaving her, wondering "Yume ka utsutsu ka?" (夢か現か, "Was I dreaming or was I awake?"),<sup>55</sup> it is likely a reference to episode 69 in the *Tales of Ise*<sup>56</sup> and thus to Ariwara no Narihira. References to Narihira appear in both stories; in *Sakuraume no sōshi*, it turns out that some of the *irui* characters are Narihira's love letters anthropomorphized. Narihira, as the quintessential classical Japanese lover, represents strong passion; to refer to the *Tales of Ise* can therefore be taken as an indication that Himegimi's emotions, particularly her romantic emotions, are an important element of this story.

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<sup>55</sup> Ichiko 1989, p. 302.

<sup>56</sup> See McCullough, Helen Craig. *Tales of Ise: Lyrical Episodes from Tenth-Century Japan*. Stanford University Press, 1968, p. 116. The Ise virgin writes a poem to a man (who is assumed to be Narihira due to allusions in the text) after a spending the night together. Her poem is as follows: "Did you, I wonder, come here, / Or might I have gone there? / I scarcely know... / Was it dream or reality— / Did I sleep or wake?" When Himegimi says, "Yume ka utsutsu ka?" 夢か現か it is precisely the same wording as the poem (Ichiko 1989, p. 302).

Another factor may be that *irui* characters have a mysterious, dreamlike element which confuses humans. Himegimi wonders if she is awake or asleep; in *Sakuraume no sōshi*, the narrator also often falls asleep or into a dreamlike state when supernatural phenomena occur. This narrative strategy does not mean that the *irui* characters are simply a figment of the other characters' imaginations. Rather, I would argue that *irui* characters occupy a rather different position in reality than humans, a fact that frequently confuses the humans they interact with. After the Lesser Captain's visits, Himegimi watches him leave only to discover that she loses sight of him when he passes by the chrysanthemums in the garden. While the young aristocrat has no obvious physical markers to show that he is a chrysanthemum spirit, this action is not normal and makes Himegimi concerned. While the text does not clearly state that he vanished, this is likely the intent, and thus evidence that he is supernatural. It is also not clear how Himegimi interprets his disappearance. The text indicates that she "loses sight of him"; did she physically lose sight of him, or is this the narrator's way of showing that Himegimi is struggling to comprehend what she sees? Here the Lesser Captain's disappearance becomes evidence of the mysterious and dreamlike element of *irui* characters.

With the beginning of the relationship between Himegimi and the Lesser Captain, we begin to see poems exchanged between the two characters. These poems often hinge on plant puns, and they appear during scenes which are highly emotional for the two main characters. The first poem we see is one that the Lesser Captain composes in grief at his parting with Himegimi after the first night they spent together. He writes the poem in order to prove his depth of feeling to Himegimi and to promise that he will return. It reads: *Ukikoto wo shinobu ga moto no asatsuyu no okiwakare nan koto zo kanashiki* うきことを忍ぶがもとの朝露の起き別  
 れなんことぞ<sup>かな</sup>悲しき“The morning dew, tears from concealing my grief, falls on the fern-lined

eaves of your bedroom—to wake and part is so very lonely.” This poem changes meaning based on the interpretation of the word *shinobu*. *Shinobu* either refers to a fern-like plant that grew around the eaves of buildings, or is a verb meaning “to hide” or “to conceal.” Interpreting *shinobu* as a reference to a plant, we get a literal and descriptive poem evoking the image of morning dew dripping from ferns near the eaves of a bedroom. The other meaning, however, plays off of the literal meaning to produce a metaphorical meaning which reveals the Lesser Captain’s emotions. Using this interpretation, the Lesser Captain is also invoking an image of himself crying because of the sadness of the morning parting. The Lesser Captain becomes the plant, and *shinobu* becomes a reference to him hiding his tears. The inclusion of this poem, as well as the others, allows the reader to experience the Lesser Captain’s thoughts and feelings more directly. Moreover, the reader is able to look more objectively at the story than Himegimi, and so the plant puns have a foreshadowing effect.

The next poem comes directly after the first and serves as Himegimi’s response to the Lesser Captain’s poem. Himegimi uses elements of his poem to formulate her own poem with an entirely different message. *Sue made to chigiri oku koso hakanakere shinobu ga moto no tsuyu to kiku yori* <sup>すへ</sup>末までと<sup>ちぎ</sup>契り<sup>(お)</sup>をくこそはかなけれ<sup>しの</sup>忍ぶがもとの<sup>つゆ</sup>露と<sup>き</sup>聞くより “Your pledge ‘till the very end’ itself is more fleeting/ Than the dew of your hidden feelings.” The second half of her poem is derived from the Lesser Captain’s, playing on the words *Shinobu* and *tsuyu*. However, here she is using the words to express doubt. Instead of emphasizing the location of the *shinobu* plant at the eaves of a bedroom, she instead emphasizes the ephemeral nature of the dew that falls from them. This is used to cast doubt on the intensity of the Lesser Captain’s feelings; if he identifies himself with the *shinobu* plant and his tears with dew, his

feelings must then be fleeting. Despite this expression of doubt, she continues to meet with him.

Not long after the two begin their romance, Himegimi's father, the Minamoto Middle Counselor, receives an order from the Emperor that he is to present the chrysanthemums from his garden at a flower-viewing party (*hanazorohe* 花揃へ). According to Yagi, the introductions to several poems from the *Kokinshū* 古今集 (ca.920) and *Shin kokinshū* 新古今集 (1205) reference the presentation of chrysanthemums, indicating that presenting them to the emperor was likely a common occurrence in Heian times.<sup>57</sup> This helps explain why the Emperor would know about the Middle Counselor's garden; as mentioned earlier, Middle Counselor was not a very high rank among aristocrats. Based on Yagi's evidence, it was likely not out of the ordinary for the Emperor to ask that they be presented. The relatively low rank of the Middle Counselor, however, still makes this request an honor for him, which explains his surprise and trepidation at the request.

Soon after the Middle Counselor receives this Imperial request, the Lesser Captain visits Himegimi again. He is very distraught and tells her that their relationship must end. He cuts off part of his sidelock and wraps it in paper for her as a memento before leaving. The next day the Middle Counselor's chrysanthemums are presented, and afterward, Himegimi waits to see the Lesser Captain again. When he does not appear, she takes out his memento only to discover that the hair inside has transformed into a withered chrysanthemum. There is also a poem written on the paper. This poem serves as a hint to Himegimi about the Lesser Captain's true form, and describes the flower that had been wrapped in the paper: *Nioi wo ba kimi ga tamoto*

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<sup>57</sup> Yagi 2001, pp. 106-7.

*ni nokoshi okite ada ni utsurō kiku no hana ka na* にほひをば<sup>きみ たもと のこ お</sup>君が袂に残し置きてあだにう

つろふ<sup>さく</sup>菊の花かな “Leaving behind a fragrance on your sleeve, it fades, a withered chrysanthemum flower.” While the poem describes the literal flower, on a metaphorical level it is a reference to the flower’s transformation and a hint that the Lesser Captain is himself a chrysanthemum. The poem is indirect, however, and it takes Himegimi some time to understand the full implication of it. The use of *nioi wo ba*, for example, is an indirect way to approach the subject of the flower, and the use of *ka na* at the end of the poem is an expression of emotion or exclamation. We might consider this ending as a prompt to Himegimi to examine the poem further. She does so, and between the flower and poem she finally realizes that the Lesser Captain was a chrysanthemum spirit all along. Thinking about him and his true form, she soon realizes that his chrysanthemums must have been cut and collected for the flower-viewing party, and that is the reason why he is no longer able to appear to her.

At this point, the chrysanthemum spirit shows an apparent lack of control over the circumstances of his demise. When he appears to Himegimi before the flower viewing party, it is clear from his lamenting that he knows that he is going to die. The reader must assume that he somehow found out about the flower viewing party and the fact that the chrysanthemums were to be cut and presented. From his reactions here, we can make some assumptions about how his form was perceived, at least within the confines of this tale. His lamentations imply that his human form was dependent on his chrysanthemum form. However, if he knows that he will die when the chrysanthemums are cut, we would expect that he would also die when the chrysanthemums withered at the end of the fall. This follows Yagi’s evidence on the association of *shiragiku* with a fleeting blooming period. I believe this also shows that the chrysanthemum is

his physical form, while his human form occupies a strange space that is not quite physical and not quite supernatural. He is, after all, physically present enough in his human form to impregnate Himegimi, but if his human form were entirely separate from his chrysanthemum form, he would not have to worry about being picked for the flower viewing. A modern reader might wonder why the Lesser Captain didn't confess to Himegimi and attempt to have his flower or flowers spared. If his physical body is the flower, however, this makes sense. The seasons still affect him as they do the other chrysanthemums, and hence any attempt to lengthen his life will be futile because his death is inevitable. The chrysanthemum spirit anticipates this, and leaves Himegimi with a lock of his hair to comfort her.

However, there is one scene that complicates the idea of the chrysanthemum spirit having a physical flower body. Because he doesn't explain his situation to Himegimi, she is left to wonder why she has been abandoned; that is, until she discovers that the lock of hair has transformed into a wilted chrysanthemum. The withered chrysanthemum wrapped in the poem complicates matters. It is not unreasonable to think that the flower left behind would only be a small piece of a flower, representative of the small piece of his human body that he had clipped off. However, the text implies that there is an entire withered chrysanthemum wrapped in the paper. What, then, is the relationship between this flower and his human form? One idea is that the withered flower is not part of his body at all, but rather a simple symbol intended to indicate to Himegimi that he was *irui*; but the fact that this flower was transformed from his sidelock makes it unlikely that the flower has no connection to his human body whatsoever. We might also consider, then, that his physical body might not be a single chrysanthemum flower. It is possible that the Lesser Captain is intended to be representative of all the white chrysanthemums in Himegimi's garden. This would still make the single chrysanthemum in the

paper a symbol which serves to indicate the truth to Himegimi, but would make more sense with the circumstances of its being left behind. It also fits very well with the circumstances of his appearing to Himegimi; after all, she loved all the white chrysanthemums, not one in particular. If this is the case, then the idea of the Lesser Captain representing multiple chrysanthemums is very different from the circumstances of *Sakuraume no sōshi*. There, it is more likely that a single cherry tree and a single plum tree are each represented as a human, and each writing brush and letter in the last section has its own unique human form.

It is also possible that by making a distinction between physical and human forms, I am enforcing a dichotomy that is contrary to what the tale's original readers believed. The fact that the flower in the paper transformed, however, suggests that there is in fact a distinction, and thus I believe that the best interpretation is that the flower wrapped in the poem acts as a symbol for the Lesser Captain's true form. The fact that it is a whole flower instead of a clipped part should simply indicate to the reader that to show part of a flower would have been too difficult and Himegimi would not easily have been able to identify it and thus figure out the truth.

When she realizes that the Lesser Captain is dead, Himegimi pines for him and gradually weakens. She becomes so depressed that her mother and her nurse notice and discuss how to address the problem. When the nurse sees a priest for a divination, the priest hints that there may be something more to the situation; and sure enough, when the nurse confronts Himegimi she tells the whole tale and reveals the fact that she is pregnant. However, Himegimi's condition continues to worsen, and when the time comes for her baby to be born, she is not strong enough to survive. After entreating her parents to take care of her child, she perishes.



There are two things that could explain Himegimi's death, and they are by no means mutually exclusive. Himegimi is depicted in the story as growing more and more depressed after learning about the death of the Lesser Captain. Based on this information, it is reasonable to assume that Himegimi simply lost her will to live. Himegimi's extreme depth of emotion to the extent that she no longer wishes to live could be an indication of the *irui* character's supernatural allure; it is possible that being with a supernatural creature has left her unable to cope with the mundane world and thus she follows him into death. However, it has been shown that Himegimi is a woman of deep emotion. The extent of her feeling, as discussed previously, is the reason why the Lesser Captain is able to take a human form to begin with. Therefore it is entirely possible that Himegimi would have lost her will to live if she lost a human companion. The important point is that in this story, it is an *irui* character who ultimately causes Himegimi to die. This implies that there is a certain amount of danger in becoming involved with *irui* characters.

There is another explanation for Himegimi's death: complications caused by her pregnancy. At the time of this story, medicine was not as advanced as it is today, and even an ordinary childbirth was fraught with danger. How much more so, then, a supernatural childbirth? It is possible that the chrysanthemum spirit caused Himegimi's death more directly, just by making her pregnant. There is not enough evidence in the story to say for certain whether Himegimi's death was due to emotional or physical causes. I suspect that it was a little bit of both; a combination of Himegimi's deep emotion and the complications of a supernatural childbirth.

Himegimi's parents are shocked to learn what has transpired. However, the reaction of the Middle Counselor is to lament the fact that Himegimi will not be able to join the court as

they had planned. This is a very serious concern. There are not many other options open for Himegimi, particularly since the Lesser Captain has died and therefore cannot take responsibility for her—precisely what she had been worried about earlier in the tale. However, it is interesting to note that her parents never mention the fact that he was a chrysanthemum. The text states that Himegimi tells the nurse everything, leaving nothing out; therefore it is reasonable to assume that her parents are aware of this fact.

If that is the case, can we assume that being with an *irui* was not considered to be a good thing? Himegimi's parents are very concerned when they find out she had a relationship with an *irui*, and then are devastated when Himegimi dies. Before she passes, Himegimi beseeches her parents not to forget about her child or treat her badly because of what had happened. Was this a necessary admonition? Would her parents have treated her poorly because she was the child of an *irui*? It is a topic worthy of further consideration, but one with insufficient evidence in this story alone. What is clear is that as the child grows into a beautiful and graceful teenager, she is able to charm them and they come to love her as much as Himegimi. In her beauty she shows some of her *irui* heritage; her father, the Lesser Captain, was also described as being extremely attractive. It is interesting to note also that in traditional Chinese associations, the chrysanthemum was viewed as one of the "Four Gentlemen," a reference to hardy plants thought to represent a scholar's virtue.<sup>58</sup> The discrepancy between this historical attribution and the reality of Himegimi's tragic situation provides an interesting dichotomy.

After Himegimi's death, the story changes focus to Himegimi's daughter. Himegimi's parents dote on the child, and she grows up to be an extraordinarily beautiful girl. The Emperor

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<sup>58</sup> Shirane 2012, p. 150.

is immediately charmed by Himegimi's daughter. As the one who had been so charmed by the chrysanthemums originally, can it be any surprise that he is charmed by a girl who is half chrysanthemum spirit? We can see that even the child of an *irui* retains some of the supernatural charm and beauty of the *irui*. Because the chrysanthemum spirit is so intimately linked to the chrysanthemums he transforms from, as we can see, for example, from the earlier discussion of its transience, it is possible that Himegimi's child even retains some of the attributes associated with the chrysanthemums specifically. What is clear is that the Emperor fawns over her in the same way he had fawned over the original chrysanthemums. It would be interesting to examine other *irui* children to see if this theory holds across these stories.

Melissa McCormick discusses the role of the Emperor in her brief description of *Kazashi no himegimi* in her book *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (she uses the English title *Tale of the Chrysanthemum Spirit*, based on the story's alternate Japanese title). According to her, the story "meanders": "Somewhere in its episodes is buried a moral concerning rewards received by those who please the emperor."<sup>59</sup> I disagree with her assessment. In my opinion, the only part of the story which might seem to "meander" is when the story continues after Himegimi's death. However, I believe that this is necessary for the story's auspicious ending, and not any kind of meandering at all. Furthermore, I view the Emperor as essentially a plot device. The moral of this story, if there can be said to be one, is not that pleasing him will bring rewards. The Emperor was merely the vehicle for Himegimi's daughter's success; if the story were about pleasing the Emperor, there would be any number of plots that could have worked. Rather, it is the lure of the supernatural and its effect on the

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<sup>59</sup> McCormick 2009.

Emperor's emotions that is most important here, and thus Himegimi's child's supernatural heritage allows her to please the Emperor and raise her station.

This is similar to the situation of *mōshigo* which I discussed in Chapter 1. *Mōshigo* are the children of gods, and in a similar manner they have characteristics inherited from the gods which predestine them for success. For another example, we can look at *Monogusa Taro*<sup>60</sup>. As a *mōshigo*, even though Taro begins the story as a lazy, dirty person dependent on the kindness of strangers, once given a chance his aristocratic nature shines through. However, it is not Taro's hard work that causes this to happen; it is merely the fact of his supernatural heritage. Similarly, it is not the fact that the Middle Counselor pleased the Emperor, or the fact that Himegimi's daughter pleased the Emperor that is important here. It is that the Emperor was drawn to the chrysanthemums and to Himegimi's daughter for their otherworldly qualities.

At the end of the tale, Himegimi's daughter is established as a court lady and consort to the Emperor when she is thirteen, which is the very future that Himegimi's parents had been hoping to acquire for Himegimi originally. As time passes, she gives birth to many imperial princes and princesses. The story ends with an auspicious phrase stressing its wonder and mystery.

The auspicious ending of *Kazashi no himegimi* is a typical feature of *otogi-zōshi*. It also gives insight into the way *irui* characters were perceived. The chrysanthemum spirit's death must lead to Himegimi's death as well, because of the depth of emotion that had to be involved. In order to achieve a happy ending, then, Himegimi's daughter has to be successful. She is, and ultimately fulfills the dream that Himegimi was supposed to fulfill by becoming the consort of

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<sup>60</sup> See Skord, Virginia. *Tales of Tears and Laughter: Short Fiction of Medieval Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991.

the Emperor. This could be seen as fulfilling the role of the genre. However, to leave it at that would be to miss something important that this story has to say about *irui* characters.

Himegimi's daughter is half *irui*. It is implied that it is this half that makes the princess so startlingly beautiful and grants her success. She is half supernatural. Thus, despite the earlier tragedy, the involvement of an *irui* character is ultimately a blessing. It imbues the human child with supernatural beauty which leads to her success. Hence, if what Ichiko Teiji meant to say in his statement about the melancholy, tragic nature of plant and human marriages was that stories of plants were imbued with deep emotion, I could agree; but if all he meant to say was that they were sad stories, I don't believe this story is a good example to support his point.

A specific feature of the ending is the use of the phrase *hodo naku wakamiya, himemiya uchi tsuzuki ideki tamaite* 程なく若宮、姫宮打ち続きいでき給ひて. This is very similar to the wording used at the end of another otogi-zōshi, *Nosezaru sōshi* のせざる草子, which reads *sono nochi onko amata ideki sase tamahi* そののち御子あまたいできさせ給ひ “After that, (he) caused many children to be born to her.”<sup>61</sup> Much like the phrase “And they lived happily ever after” in Western folklore, it would appear that to point to a number of children being born at the end of the story was a general way to indicate good fortune at the end of a story.

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<sup>61</sup> “Nosezaru sōshi” のせざるさうし. Posted on the Waseda University Library's Kotenseki sōgō dētabēsu, 古典積総合データベース, [http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he12/he12\\_02939\\_0012/index.html](http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he12/he12_02939_0012/index.html). Viewed 11 May 2013, p. 27.

## Sakuraume no sōshi

There are only two known texts for *Sakuraume no sōshi*. According to the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese books, one is a typeset edition from the collection of Horiguchi Sozan 堀口蘇山.<sup>62</sup> Horiguchi is listed in the Harvard Sackler Museum database as being a twentieth century painter, and his typeset edition is likely the one listed in the *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei* 室町時代物語大成 as being copied from a manuscript which is now lost. There is a copy of Horiguchi's typeset edition available in the *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei*, and that is the source which forms the basis for my translation.

*Sakuraume no sōshi* is listed in the *Otogi-zōshi jiten* 御伽草子事典 by Tokuda Kazuo 徳田和夫 as an *iruimono shōsetsu* 異類物小説 (a story of non-humans) and *iruimono kaikondan* 異類物怪婚談 (a story of non-human marriage). Tokuda's estimate for the date of the story is around the middle of the Muromachi period.<sup>63</sup> Tokuda's sources are Horiguchi's transcription and Ichiko Teiji's *Chūsei shōsetsu no kenkyū* (Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1955). Although none of the original pictures remain, Tokuda notes that the auspicious ending of the tale is similar to Ashikaga-period small scrolls. It is therefore generally assumed that the original format of this tale was a small scroll with black and white illustrations (*hakubyō* 白描). In the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese books, this scroll is attributed to Sōgi (宗祇, 1421- 1502), although the reason for this association is not clear. Sōgi was a priest, a master of *renga* 連歌, and a prolific writer.

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<sup>62</sup> "Sakuraume no sōshi" 桜梅草子. Available online at the National Institute of Japanese Literature *Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan* 国文学研究資料館, Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books, *Nihon kotenseki sōgō mokuroku dētābēsu* 日本古典籍総合目録データベース, [http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta\\_pub/KTGDefault.exe?DEF\\_XSL=default&GRP\\_ID=G0001401&DB\\_ID=G0001401KTG&IS\\_TYPE=meta&IS\\_STYLE=default..](http://base1.nijl.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/KTGDefault.exe?DEF_XSL=default&GRP_ID=G0001401&DB_ID=G0001401KTG&IS_TYPE=meta&IS_STYLE=default..)

<sup>63</sup> Mashimo Miyako 真下美弥子. "Sakuraume no sōshi" 桜梅草子. In *Otogi-zōshi jiten* お伽草子事典, ed. Tokuda Kazuo 徳田和夫. Tōkyōdō shuppan, 2002., pp. 262-3.

Although he generally wrote treatises on *renga* and the court classics, it is not unreasonable to think he may have written short stories as well; however, there does not seem to be any reliable evidence that he was indeed the author of this story.<sup>64</sup>

*Sakuraume no sōshi* provides an interesting contrast to *Kazashi no himegimi* in several ways. One of the most obvious ways it differs is in its two-story format. Unlike *Kazashi's* long, cohesive narrative, there are two stories here: the first, a story about the trees in the narrator's garden taking on human form, and second, a story about writing implements taking on human form. The only character to tie these stories together is the narrator. The theme of the two stories is, however, very similar, and it is easy to see why they have been grouped this way. In the final lines of the tale, we see that the reason why the objects in each story were able to take on human form is because they were so moved by emotion.

Another contrast is the perspective of *Sakuraume no sōshi*. *Kazashi no himegimi* is written in the relatively objective third person, whereas *Sakuraume no sōshi* is written in the typically emotive and subjective first person. There are several reasons why this difference makes sense. The story has few characters and is centered on the actions of *Kazashi no himegimi* and the Lesser Captain (the chrysanthemum spirit). The third-person narrative style makes it easy to portray each character's thoughts and actions within the same scene. *Sakuraume no sōshi*, on the other hand, describes two mysterious events related by the presence of *irui* characters, and as such it makes sense that the story would be told in the first person. In this case, a first person perspective can better connect the two different tales into one relatively cohesive unit.

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<sup>64</sup> *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, ed. Haruo Shirane. Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 1076-7.

While the multiple-story format of *Sakuraume no sōshi* may be very different from *Kazashi no himegimi*, it is clear from the final lines of the tale that the *irui* character's motivation in each story is the same. The chrysanthemum spirit was moved by Kazashi no himegimi, and that is why he took on a human form to have a relationship with her. In the same way, it seems that the spirits of trees and writing brushes are moved by the love of the narrator to take physical form. In the first story, women who later turn out to be *irui* mysteriously appear in the narrator's garden. One might think, then, that their transformation is unrelated to the narrator's feelings. However, we later learn that these are the spirits of trees from the narrator's front garden, and so it is reasonable to think that, as in the case of *Kazashi no himegimi*, appreciation of these plants was the impetus for their transformation. The connection is more clearly drawn in the second story, where the letters turn out to be the love letters of Narihira. It seems that the emotion in Narihira's letters is enough on its own to allow the transformation; the lady who drops the letters by the gate is presumably in human form at the beginning of the story, before she met the narrator. The narrator does not mention anything odd about her at that point. The rest of the *irui* characters, however, show up after the narrator has spent the night reading the letters and yearning for the woman who dropped them. In this case it is very clear that his emotions cause the transformation. Although it is easiest to see in this story, I believe that the connection between strong human emotion and the transformation of plants into humans applies to each of the three stories under consideration in this thesis.

*Sakuraume no sōshi* also differs in its content and style. If *Kazashi no himegimi* is rooted in Heian narrative tradition, *Sakuraume no sōshi* has a later, more medieval flavor. Part of this difference is due to *Sakuraume no sōshi's* first person perspective, which sets it apart from the traditional *monogatari* structure. There are also some subtle differences in vocabulary in both



stories. In *Kazashi no himegimi*, the chrysanthemum spirit refers to Himegimi's *tainai* 胎内 or womb, a word that would be startlingly direct in a classical text. In *Sakuraume no sōshi*, the narrator wonders if a certain lady might be a *bakemono* 化物. Possibly the most interesting medieval feature of *Sakuraume no sōshi* is its interpolated story explaining Keshō Bumi's name and the origins of makeup. In *Sakuraume no sōshi*, the narrator describes the ladies beating another lady with sticks. The use of violence in a story that is essentially about romance is also striking, and something unlikely to appear even in contemporary works such as *Kazashi no himegimi*. Finally, one might consider the fact that the narrator has so many women falling for him throughout the story to reflect a more modern sentiment.

In my analysis of *Kazashi no himegimi*, I have explored the idea of the physical form of *irui* characters; specifically, whether or not they had one and what its connection was to its human form. The stories of *Sakuraume no sōshi* provide an example in support of the idea that *irui* characters do have a physical form. The chrysanthemum spirit in *Kazashi no himegimi* is similar to the mysterious ladies at the beginning of *Sakuraume no sōshi*, in that the only physical indicator that the ladies in the latter are supernatural is their unusual beauty. In stark contrast are the ladies of the second *Sakuraume no sōshi* story, who have twisted necks or round faces depending on the form of the letters they transformed from.

The idea of physical versus spiritual forms comes to the forefront again when the narrator dreams that his second lady is being beaten by his first lady and her attendants. Here, the ladies' human forms appear in his dream, and he sees the ladies attack her. When he checks the garden in the morning, he sees that their physical forms, the trees, have sustained considerable damage. An interesting question here is whether their physical forms or spiritual forms were the ones actually inflicting the damage. I believe evidence points to their spiritual

forms causing the damage which is reflected in their physical forms. However, there is also the implication that the two forms are intricately connected. It is possible that, as I suggested earlier, the distinction between the two forms I have outlined here may not have been perceived to be as great at the time of composition.

After the narrator begins seeing his second lady, the lady dressed in white, he has a dream. At first, the narrator does not even realize he is dreaming. When dawn breaks and he tugs on her sleeve, she tells him to look very carefully, and he notices that her sleeve is turned inside out. This is another folkloric piece of evidence for the narrator that she may not be human. He mentions a saying that by turning one's sleeve inside out one can travel beyond one's own eaves; this implies that the lady was not physically present with the narrator. Use of this saying also implies, though it does not clearly state, that it is a dream. This section is likely based on poem 554 from the *Kokin wakashū*, attributed to Ono no Komachi 小野小町: *Ito semete koi shiki toki wa mubatama no yoru no koromo wo kaeshite zo kiru* いとせめてこひしき時はむばたまの夜の衣をかへしてぞきる. "When longing for you/ torments me beyond my strength, / I reverse my robe,/ raiment of seed-black night, / and put it on inside-out."<sup>65</sup> Perhaps Komachi puts her robe on inside-out in order to encourage dreams of her beloved, or to travel to his bedside. It certainly seems to be the case that the lady in the narrator's dream has turned her own robe inside out in order to travel to see her love. What is interesting about this is that, if the poem and the narrator are to be believed, the lady is not relying on any

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<sup>65</sup> McCullough, Helen Craig, trans. *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry*. Stanford University Press, 1985, pp. 126-7. McCullough notes that "According to popular belief, this was a way to make the man appear in her dreams." Rodd, Laurel Rasplica and Mary Catherine Hekinius, trans. *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*. Cheng & Tsui Company, 1996. Reprint of Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 209 mentions that the idea of turning one's robe inside-out also appears in *Man'yōshū* poems 2812, 2813, and 2937.

supernatural powers, but rather the narrator's folk belief that any human could accomplish. This may suggest that *irui* characters have limited power. Looking at *Kazashi no himegimi* as well as the two stories of *Sakuraume no sōshi*, the only powers *irui* characters seem to have over humans are a supernatural beauty and charm and the ability to appear in a human form.

Tokuda Kazuo has developed a theory about the purpose of the episodes in *Sakuraume no sōshi*. The next episode is a long aside intended to explain (or perhaps invent) the origins of a popular word or phrase. The word or phrase is known as a *kojiseigo* 故事成語. What Tokuda suggests is that the entire first section of the story may also have been intended to create a *kojiseigo*. The word he indicates is *uwanariuchi* うわなり打ち, which may be best translated as “a vendetta of the first wife against the second wife.”

The Keshō Bumi section of *Sakuraume no sōshi* is what Tokuda considers a setup for a *kojiseigo*. The aside adds nothing to the story, but simply explains the origin of a popular phrase. Before we dismiss it completely, however, we should note that it does tie in with the rest of the story in its theme. The story about the woman in love with Emperor Nintoku is also a story about deep emotion causing a character to change her appearance. While there is nothing supernatural about wearing makeup for the first time, her appearance was regarded as extraordinary. Her extraordinary appearance affects the Emperor greatly, and that is how she ultimately wins his heart. This is very similar to how *irui* characters, moved by deep emotions, change their forms in order to be with the humans who love them, and win them over with their supernatural charm. In this way I do not believe that this aside exists merely to explain a common cultural practice. While it may seem to wander from the plot, we can see that this aside parallels the situation of the *irui* characters. As such, it may have been considered a good way to transition from the first story in *Sakuraume no sōshi* to the next.

The second story is about love letters which turn into humans in order to have a relationship with the main character. The story is set up with the dropped letters at the gate just before the Keshō Bumi section. Keshō Bumi then serves as a go-between, bringing the woman who dropped the letters to the narrator's house. To the narrator's surprise, she is accompanied by a large and strange group. Among them are women with twisted necks and rounded faces; this is his first indication that they are not quite as they seem. Nevertheless, he spends the night with them. When they insist they must leave, he manages to convince them to stay.

Although not clear in the story, it is the light of dawn which allows the narrator to see the women and their attendants for what they really are: letters and writing brushes. This seems to be a commonality between *Kazashi no himegimi* and the two stories of *Sakuraume no sōshi*. In *Kazashi no himegimi*, the main character only sees the Lesser Captain at night. However, in this case their meetings at night are easily explained by the fact that the Lesser Captain must sneak in to see Himegimi when her attendants are asleep. This is a common feature in Heian romances. However, the fact that this is also the case in both stories of *Sakuraume no sōshi* suggests that we should take a closer look. In the first story, the narrator meets the women at night, and they never stay after the dawn has broken. When he finally sees them as a cherry tree and a plum tree, it is when he goes out to his garden in the daytime. Is this part of the supernatural nature of these *irui* characters? If the Lesser Captain had remained into the daylight, would Kazashi have seen him for who he really was? While beyond the scope of this paper, it is an interesting question and it is something I would like to research in the future.

I would like to turn now to an analysis of the poetry in *Sakuraume no sōshi*. This tale contains four poems, and three of them are in the first story. The first story is similar in theme to *Kazashi no himegimi*, and the focus is on the romance between the narrator and the two

women. Here the poetry serves as the overtures between the narrator and the second lady, the lady who transforms from the cherry tree. As in *Kazashi no himegimi*, plant puns abound. The very first pun of this section is the fact that the page girl who brings the letters back and forth is named Ogi, which is a type of reed. It is interesting to note that Ogi was a plant that was poetically associated with autumn.<sup>66</sup>

The first poem is one that the narrator writes upon seeing that his previous letters have gone unopened. *Shinobu kusa tsuyu no nasake wa kage yokashi ukiyo no naka ni arihatenu mi ni* 忍ぶ草、露の情けは、かげよかし、浮世の中に、あり果てぬ身に; “Hidden grass I yearn for, please sprinkle a tiny drop of compassion onto this self of mine, which will not last long in this miserable world.” This poem entreats the lady to show him some kindness and at least open the letters he sends. Here we see again the word *shinobu*; as we saw in *Kazashi no himegimi*, *shinobu* can be a reference to a plant or to hiding. The word *tsuyu* also has multiple meanings, and can refer to either dew or tears in this poem.

The lady’s response poem is *shinobutomo iku tsumorinaba kayoiji no fumi mi shi koto mo araware ya sen* 忍ぶとも、行つもりなば、かよひぢの、文見しことも、あらはれやせん: “Even if you yearn in hiding, the number of times I have tread the road to your place accumulates; shouldn’t that make it clear that I have seen your letters?” This poem incorporates *shinobu* from the narrator’s poem, while punning on the similarity of *fumi mi shi* (having seen your letter) to *fumi michi* (the road one walks upon). This poem serves to tell the narrator that she is in fact interested in him, and that she knows what is inside the letters. The question remains whether or not she has actually opened the letters, whether she is just inferring what is in them, or whether she can somehow read them without needing to open them. In any case,

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<sup>66</sup> Shirane 2012, p. 222.

her response prompts the narrator's reply. He writes: *Naka naka ni shinobahamu sue ayame kusa tsutsumu namida no mori mo koso sure* 中々に、しのばはむ末、あやめ草、つつむ涙の、もりもこそすれ: "After longing and longing, tears finally fill the grasses of the iris flower, and indeed a single droplet spills out." This expresses his joy that she has finally responded. He incorporates the word *shinobu* again, but *tsuyu* is replaced with the more straightforward *namida* and another plant, the iris, is introduced.

The final poem occurs under special circumstances. Through the second story of *Sakuraume no sōshi*, there are no poems. Perhaps this is because the focus of this story is more on the strangeness of the *irui* characters rather than the romance between them and the narrator. When we do finally get a poem, it is in the revelation at the end of the story. Here the narrator has discovered that the women were letters and the samurai were writing brushes, and he is trying to figure out what would have caused them to take shape and visit him. He does not fall asleep, but he falls into a dreamlike or meditative state of some kind, and he hears a voice. The voice speaks a poem: *Aware nari mukashigatari mo Narihira no ato bakari kozo katami nari kere* 哀れなり、昔語りも、業平の、後ばかりこぞ、形見なりけれ. I have translated this as "How sad that only the calligraphy of Narihira remains as a memento of the stories of old." This poem is rather different than the others. Its purpose is to inform the narrator that the letters were those of Ariwara no Narihira. The narrator interprets this poem to mean that his encounter with the strange women was caused by the Fuji Bodhisattva; a bodhisattva who is likely an incarnation of Kannon. We do not see any plant puns in this poem, but we do see a reference to the shape of the *irui* characters from this story: the love letters of Narihira.

Tokuda Kazuo mentions in his *Otogi-zōshi jiten* that the plot of this section of *Sakuraume no sōshi* is similar to the *otogi-zōshi* known as *Narihira yume monogatari* 業平夢物

語.<sup>67</sup> While beyond the scope of this thesis, it is an interesting connection that should be explored. As discussed earlier, Tokuda believed the first section of the story to be an explanation of the origin of the word *uwanariuchi*; what this could mean is that each part of *Sakuraume no sōshi* serves a distinct purpose beyond simple storytelling. The first story explains the word *uwanariuchi*, the Keshō bumi section forms an aside explaining the origins of an unrelated phrase and including the idea of extraordinary appearances, and the second story forms an allusion to another tale.

Finally, I would like to present my translations of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*.

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<sup>67</sup> Mashimo 2002, p. 263.

## CHAPTER 3

### TRANSLATIONS

#### Kazashi no Himegimi

Long ago near the Fifth Avenue of the capital, there lived a man called the Minamoto Middle Counselor, who was an unfailingly kind person. The Lady of the North Wing<sup>68</sup> was the Cabinet Minister's daughter, and they had a single daughter who was called Kazashi no Himegimi. To look upon her, the sight of her hair falling past her shoulders, her eyebrows, and the shape of her lips were all very beautiful. In the spring she passed her days under blossoming trees, and in the fall beneath the moon she watched as the dawn broke, and she often composed poetry and she took great pleasure in the various flowers and grasses. Among them she loved the chrysanthemums particularly, and around the Ninth month she found it difficult to pull herself away from the garden. Thus she passed her days.

Near the end of the autumn of her fourteenth year, she found the fading of the chrysanthemums to be especially poignant. When she dozed off, she saw the figure of a man about twenty years old wearing a hat and a light purple robe, his face lightly made up and teeth blackened, and his eyebrows drawn in thickly.<sup>69</sup> His startlingly beautiful fragrance and highly elegant appearance put one in mind of Narihira of ancient times, or the Shining Prince, and when he came over to her, she was unsure if she was awake or dreaming. When she roused herself in agitation, he held her sleeve and said, "Might you not have, perhaps, the slightest dewdrop of feeling for me?" and he cried and cried and entreated her with every word and

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<sup>68</sup> A set phrase indicating the first or primary wife.

<sup>69</sup> According to Heian fashion.



phrase he could think of. Himegimi must have been moved by it, for they threw off her undersash of midnight,<sup>70</sup> and he was very happy, and he spent the night speaking about the past and hopes for the future.

When it came time for them to part, he turned to Himegimi and said, “I will come again another night without fail,” and, in tears, composed:

*The morning dew, tears from concealing my grief, falls on the fern-lined  
eaves of your bedroom—  
to wake and part is so very lonely.*<sup>71</sup>

Whereupon Himegimi promptly replied,

*Your pledge ‘till the very end’ itself is more fleeting  
Than the dew of your hidden feelings.*<sup>72</sup>

After this response, she watched him go as far as the area around the chrysanthemums by the rough-woven fence, and then he vanished without a trace.

Afterward, even though Kazashi no Himegimi increasingly wondered about it, there was no way she could ask someone<sup>73</sup>; but in spite of herself, the bond between the two of them

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<sup>70</sup> A reference to sexual relations.

<sup>71</sup> *Ukikoto wo shinobu ga moto no asatsuyu no okiwakare nan koto zo kanashiki* うきことを忍ぶがもとの朝露の起き別れなんことぞ悲しき The poem here hinges on the word *shinobu*, which can either mean “to conceal/ to hide” or can refer to a plant that often grew near the eaves of a house. This is a reference to their parting at dawn after spending a night together.

<sup>72</sup> *Sue made to chigiri oku koso wa kana kere shinobu ga moto no tsuyu to kiku yori* 末までと契りをくこそはかなけれ忍ぶがもとの露と聞くより Himegimi uses both *shinobu* and *tsuyu* from the Lesser Captain’s poem, but changes the poem to say that she worries about his intentions.

<sup>73</sup> Because this would indicate that she was secretly seeing someone.

deepened. He came secretly; and soon Himegimi, unaware of how many days had passed, asked, “What is this secret you’re covering up? Won’t you just tell me your name?”

He replied shyly, “For now, know that I am called the Lesser Captain. I am sure that later you will understand,” and so saying, left her.

Around that time it was announced that the Emperor would have a flower viewing party, and that the Middle Counselor would also participate. When the Emperor summoned the Middle Counselor and told him, “You shall gather your extraordinarily beautiful chrysanthemums and bring them to me,” the Middle Counselor was in no position to refuse the request, so he returned home, thinking about presenting the chrysanthemums.

Hence, that evening when the Lesser Captain came to the western wing,<sup>74</sup> he was in a much more wilted state than usual, and spoke about the ephemeral things in this world. Since he was clearly on the verge of tears, Kazashi no Himegimi wondered what was wrong and said, “What has you worrying so? Tell me, and don’t hold anything back.” She spent the whole night through repeating this, until finally he said, “Why should I hold anything back? Today is the last day I can come to see you, and so the fact that we must part, even though I had thought we would be together through the next life, is why I am so upset.”

And when he cried as though in anguish, Himegimi responded, “What can you be talking about? I have placed a deep trust in you,<sup>75</sup> and if you’re saying, ‘Oh, what will become of me,’ what are you saying about what will become of me? Won’t you take me with you, even to the ends of the fields and the depths of the mountains?” Himegimi expressed her feelings openly

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<sup>74</sup> According to the *shinden zukuri* architecture of Heian estates, the private quarters were arranged in wings branching off of the main hall.

<sup>75</sup> There is the implication here that Himegimi is pregnant.

and didn't hide her sadness, but the Lesser Captain knew that he could not follow his heart, and so there was nothing he could say.

After a while the Lesser Captain said through his tears, "Now I must leave you and return quickly. Please, please be sure not to forget me. Could I ever forget you, even in the next world?" Saying other such things, he cut a length of hair from his sidelock and wrapped it in a piece of decorated paper. "If there comes a time when you wish to remember me, please look at this," he said, and gave it to Himegimi, adding, "And because I am leaving a sprout<sup>76</sup> inside of you, raise it as well as you can, and think of it as a memento of me." So saying, he left, crying, and when he had done so Himegimi snuck out as far as the bamboo blinds to look. Just when she thought he had paused near the fence in the garden, she could no longer see him.

Thus when the next day dawned, the Middle Counselor took the chrysanthemums to be shown to the Emperor, who could not stop looking at them and praising them. That night, even though Himegimi waited all evening, she did not see the Lesser Captain again even in her dreams. For the brokenhearted Himegimi, although the outline of the moon above the treetops was unclouded in the clear midnight sky, her heart was clouded by her tears. One morning after many a long night, she took out the memento he had left her, and looking at it longingly, saw that a poem had been written on it.

*Leaving behind a fragrance on your sleeve,  
it fades, a withered chrysanthemum flower.<sup>77</sup>*

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<sup>76</sup> The word used here is *midoriko* みどり子, literally "green child." While this was also an acceptable term for "child," indicating Himegimi's pregnancy, it is clearly also used for the pun.

<sup>77</sup> *Nioi wo ba kimi ga tamoto ni nokoshi okite adani utsurou kiku no hana ka na* にほひをば君が袂に残し置きてあだにうつろふ菊の花かな

What she had thought was black hair had indeed become a withered chrysanthemum. This troubled her more and more, until finally the words he had composed made her realize that he was in fact a chrysanthemum spirit. She went and stood among the white chrysanthemums in the garden and said, “There is an old poem which says, ‘Even if the petals have scattered, the roots do not wither,’<sup>78</sup> and now I understand it for myself. Even if you are a chrysanthemum spirit, please exchange just one word with me.” It now seemed entirely natural that he should have been so uneasy.

“If there had been no flower-viewing party, then this unfortunate situation would never have happened. But it doesn’t matter, since now I will not live much longer,” she said, and thinking about it grew sadder and sadder. “Please come to me quickly, Lesser Captain. To whom have you entrusted me, and where did you think you were going? Although you said we were to part, how shallow of you to think this mortal body would live on with just ordinary grief! I don’t know— was I dreaming or was I awake?”<sup>79</sup> Thus was her anger and confusion, and she lay down and sank into silence. His having said only “Don’t forget me!”— she now understood those to truly be his final words. “To have such a fleeting bond was a cruel trick! Please appear in front of me just once more,” she said sadly, and more than ever lamented the difficult future she faced in her condition.

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<sup>78</sup> This is a reference to *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 poem 268 by Ariwara no Narihira 在原業平: *Ue shi ueba aki naki toki ya sakazaramu hana koso chirame ne sae karemeya* 植ゑし植ゑば 秋なき時や 咲かざらむ 花こそ散らめ 根さへ枯れめや. “If it has been well planted, / It will fail to bloom / Only if autumn should fail to come, / And though the petals scatter / The roots will never die” (McCullough 1968, p. 173). This poem is rendered particularly relevant by its introduction, which implies that when planting flowers, one connects oneself to them.

<sup>79</sup> See McCullough 1968, p. 116. As discussed in Chapter 1, this is a reference to episode 69 from the *Tales of Ise*, in which the Ise Virgin sends a poem to the protagonist about their tryst the night before: *kimi ya koshi ware ya yukikemu omoezu yume ka utsutsu ka nete ka samete ka*. “Did you, I wonder, come here, / Or might I have gone there? / I scarcely know... / Was it dream or reality— / Did I sleep or wake?”

Because Himegimi was troubled, her nurse worried that something was wrong. When she told Himegimi's mother the story, even the Middle Counselor made a fuss, but though they lavished care on her, it was to no avail. Her nurse went to a shaman and said, "A fifteen-year-old princess has been unwell since the last day of the ninth month at the hour of the Bird.<sup>80</sup> Please divine what we should do."

The shaman answered, "This divination is a very puzzling one. Might she be in an unusual condition? No matter how you look at it, the divination predicts danger."

The nurse wondered about it and hurried back. When she told Himegimi's mother what had happened, the lady said, "I also thought she looked pregnant, but didn't believe it, because she couldn't possibly become pregnant without you knowing. It doesn't seem appropriate for me to say it aloud, so I wonder if you could ask her very subtly if something might have happened."

When she had said this, the nurse went back to Himegimi's quarters and approached her, whispering confidentially, "Looking at you, you don't seem to be quite yourself. It surely seems that you are keeping some kind of secret. I wonder if you would let me know what is in your heart." Since it was not something she could keep secret until the end, Himegimi thought 'why not just tell her?', and shyly told the whole thing from beginning to end, leaving nothing out. When she finished, the nurse was astonished.

She went to the Lady of the North Wing, and when she had repeated everything she had just heard, the Middle Counselor said, "This is shocking beyond anything else! All we thought about was preparing her for entrance into the court. To simply give up on that is truly unfortunate." He was exceedingly upset.

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<sup>80</sup> 5-7 p.m.

As days passed one after another, Himegimi's spirits continued to sink and she looked very helpless. The nurse and many ladies came and waited on her, and she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. The Middle Counselor and the others from the Northern Wing came and did everything they could to assist her. Even so, it seemed that Kazashi no Himegimi was not long for this world.

Within the chamber Middle Counselor and Himegimi's mother grieved. Kazashi no Himegimi had her parents brought close to her and, weeping intensely, said, "Since we know that all living things must fade, why lament? More than anything, my one concern left in this world is the matter of my precious daughter. Even though I should pass away, you should not neglect her. That a person should die before one's parents is truly sad, and I think it is wretched. It is very difficult to part with you and with everyone." These were her last words, and then she vanished with the morning dew. The Middle Counselor and the Lady of the North Wing saw that there was nothing left that they could do. The nurse was so upset that she cut her hair and took the tonsure.<sup>81</sup> It was moving beyond words.

They couldn't simply leave her like that, so weeping uncontrollably, they took her out into the country and cremated her. When they had gone through the services, they increasingly lavished their attention on their grandchild. As the years accumulated, she grew to look more and more like Kazashi no Himegimi. She became more and more precious and loved, and her parents got many of the court ladies to serve her. Months passed and she turned seven years old and had her pants-fitting ceremony. The days passed, and before they knew it she turned thirteen. With a beautiful appearance and form, people said that even Yang Kwei-Fei of the

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<sup>81</sup> Literally *sama wo zo kae ni keru* 様をぞかへにける, or "changed her appearance." This is a reference to her cutting her hair upon becoming a nun.

Tang, Madam Li of the Han, Japan's Princess Sotōri, Ono no Komachi, and the like<sup>82</sup> could not compare to her.

After a while, the Emperor heard this and ordered, "Have her come serve me as a consort." Thus she was established as a court lady. There was no end to the happiness of the Middle Counselor and the Lady of the North Wing. The Emperor, they heard, favored her tremendously. Since the princess truly matched everything he had wanted her to be, very shortly young imperial princes and princesses were born to her, and people said that it was indeed exceptionally wonderful.

Since this is an example of a truly remarkable thing, I am writing it down so that it will last to the end of days.

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<sup>82</sup> Historical beauties of China and Japan.

### Sakuraume no sōshi

Midway through spring, when I looked out at the tops of the flowering trees penetrating the mist in the light of the setting sun, there were five or six very captivating ladies standing together in the garden. I wondered what kind of people they were, and when I asked where they were going, the ladies just smiled, and without saying a word the attendants charmingly gathered close around their ladies.

When I approached them, wondering if they had perhaps mistaken my house for another's, and said things like "Would you like to take a rest here?" they all sat down in a line. When the moon, close to the outline of the mountains, showed that the day was close to dawning, the ladies all left. It was endlessly puzzling.

Afterward I spent some time wondering what it could have been, until one evening they came again, just like before. They were very lovely, and I noticed that they were all less than twenty years of age.

They were elegant and mysterious, and certainly out of the ordinary. We<sup>83</sup> debated where they could have come from and what kind of people they were, since there seemed to be no way to ask them. I was invited closer by one among them who was as bright as the moon and slightly more adult<sup>84</sup> than the others. "They say the Capital is broad," she said, "but to live here is melancholy. Although we have a place to stay, we have no real home, and so we have set our hearts on this place. We have been here nearly a year, but we have no one to depend on. Have we spent the years in vain?" She spoke with increasing feeling, and it was very moving.

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<sup>83</sup> Although other characters are not mentioned in the plot, the male protagonist evidently has companions.

<sup>84</sup> The most likely interpretation of this phrase is that it refers to the lady whom the ladies-in-waiting are serving; she is older than the girls serving her. Over the course of the story, the protagonist has relationships with two ladies-in-waiting.



We spent the night having fun telling stories of the world, and just before dawn the temple bells sounded, and we regretted the sorrow of parting. Among those who were leaving, one wore a crimson and purple robe,<sup>85</sup> and lingered nearby. Since it appeared she may have a fondness for me and wanted to remain, very happily, she did not leave. We conversed tirelessly for the rest of the night. Our lament at the brightening of the sky was infinite, but we parted.

I was unable to focus on anything else, not knowing if we would be able to see each other again. I could not wait for the sky to brighten, but the nights when we could not pledge our love were long and we were unable to meet.<sup>86</sup>

About seven days went by this way, and then they came again as before, bringing their lady with them. Among them was the one with whom I had exchanged a pledge, and we spent the night composing poetry and such. When they were about to leave, my heart was moved by a pale, slender woman who was very elegant in both form and manner, and I slipped a letter in her sleeve as she left. The lady from before saw this, and her face changed color; this too was very beautiful. When I stopped her she gave me a scolding look and left. They came and went frequently after that, and meanwhile, I continued to wonder who they were.

Days passed, until one evening while they were there a twelve- or thirteen-year-old page girl came with a letter. I saw that it was the letter I had given her, the knot unopened. I thought that was very strange, but still I wrote out a reply, tied it with a knot, and gave it to the girl.

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<sup>85</sup> She wore *usuginu* 薄絹 or thin robes, in the *kōbai* 紅梅 colors. Kobai colors were crimson on top with purple underneath, and was one of the *kasane* 襲 (standard color pairs) and a common spring pattern. *Kōbai* is also the title of one of the chapters of the *Tale of Genji*.

<sup>86</sup> This section is written in a highly poetical style.

*Hidden grass I yearn for, please sprinkle a tiny drop of compassion onto this self  
of mine, which will not last long in this miserable world.*

I asked for the page girl's name, and she said she was called Ogi.<sup>87</sup> When it looked as though she were about to leave, she handed me a reply:

*Even if you yearn in hiding, the number of times I have tread the road to  
your place<sup>88</sup> accumulates; shouldn't that make it clear that I have seen  
your letters?*

she wrote, and I replied,

*After longing and longing, tears finally fill the grasses of the Iris flower,  
and indeed a single droplet spills out.*

It became the third month of spring, and because she stayed over more and more, I lamented our parting over and over. One morning when dawn arrived and she was about to return home, she said, "I won't be able to see you again." It was very sad, and when I tugged her sleeve to stop her, she said "Look carefully at my sleeve," and vanished.

Lost and uncertain, I looked at the sleeve to find that she had been wearing it inside out,<sup>89</sup> and the lady had vanished. Amazingly, she was not a mere human, and I wondered if she might be a changeling. It was exceedingly mysterious. It must really be true that by wearing a robe that has been turned inside out, one can travel beyond their own eaves.

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<sup>87</sup> This is also a reed-like plant which grows in swampy areas in the fall.

<sup>88</sup> There is a pun on *fumi mi shi* 文見し (I saw your letter) and *fumi michi* 踏み道 (to walk the road).

<sup>89</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, this is likely a reference to poem 554 in the *Kokinshū* by Ono no Komachi: *Ito semete koi shiki toki wa mubatama no yoru no koromo wo kaeshite zo kuru* いとせめてこひしき時はむばたまの夜の衣をかへしてぞきる. "When longing for you/ torments me beyond my strength, / I reverse my robe,/ raiment of seed-black night, / and put it on inside-out," McCullough 1985, pp. 126-7.

This lady returned in a dream the night after she had gone. From the branch of a plum tree in the front garden came the lady I had first exchanged pledges with, along with four or five others who were holding various sticks. It looked as though they were going to go hit something, so I watched them going by. They went to the cherry tree at the side of the front garden,<sup>90</sup> where there was a woman who appeared to be my second lady, and together they struck her vigorously. While I was thinking about how terrible it was, I awoke from the dream.

When dawn began to break, I went to look. The cherry branches were broken and bashed, and on the plum tree as well there remained only the bottom branches, and not a single higher branch. All the cherry branches and such were scattered on the ground.

Thinking upon this deeply, I had first lost my heart to the blossoms, and then because I loved them, I moved them as well. Perhaps because she wished to tell me her feelings, I had first exchanged vows with the one wearing crimson and plum;<sup>91</sup> she was the plum tree in the front garden. The one I had exchanged a pledge with second, white and beautiful, was the cherry tree by the shrine. It was all very mysterious. I realized that after that, the second lady must have been trying to tell me<sup>92</sup> that they would fight over me.

Sometime later, a carriage was leaving the imperial palace and stopped near the Kōka<sup>93</sup> gate. A lady descended from it, and I saw something colorful fall from the hem of her garment. It was a packet of bound letters. Because the words she had written were truly elegant, she

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<sup>90</sup> *Sensai*, given no diacritic marks here, was used both to mean “front garden” and “first wife,” 先妻 so this can also be read “From the branches of his first wife.”

<sup>91</sup> The *kōbai* colors mentioned earlier.

<sup>92</sup> Use of the word *kemu* in the text here probably refers back to the cherry tree’s hesitance.

<sup>93</sup> The Kōkamon 皇嘉門, a gate leading from the city into the Imperial compound on the west side of the southern wall.

intrigued me; so I took the letters with me and spent the night yearning for her and holding them close to my chest.

Two or three days later, a lady only about fifteen or sixteen years old struggled to come in from the gate, so broken down that she didn't even seem like a person. Thinking it strange, I called her into the house, and when I asked who she was, she said, "I am a go-between in the capital." Feeling a little let down, I thought that her appearance did not seem to be that of an ordinary human, and what she said was somewhat implausible. "Where are you from?" I asked, "and what is your name?"

"I am called Keshō Bumi," she said, "and anyone of any consequence should know of me."

"What a strange name!" I said. "What kind of person have you been sent to tell me about?"

The lady responded thus: "Let me explain why I am called Keshō Bumi. A long time ago, in the time of the Emperor Nintoku, there was an attendant who served him very closely and loved him very much, but was unable to show her feelings. There was no end to her longing as she yearned to be with him.<sup>94</sup> The innermost depths of her heart were tangled, but he didn't think of her even a little bit.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> This is a reference to poem 1 from the Tales of Ise: *Kasugano no wakamurasaki no surigoromo shinobu no midare kagiri shirarezu*. "Like the random pattern of this robe, / Dyed with the young purple / From Kasuga Plain—/ Even thus is the wild disorder / Of my yearning heart," McCullough 1968, p. 69. The story reads *shinobu mochisuri wa, kagiri naku, kokoro no oku no, midare nari shi ni* 忍ぶもちすりは、かぎりなく、心の奥の、みたれなりしに, which references the poem through the use of the phrases *shinobu*, *kagiri naku*, and *midare*.

<sup>95</sup> There is a pun here between *omoi kakeru* 思いかける (to hang one's heart on) and *kakutemo kakutemo* (thus).

“What shall I do? If only I could offer up some kind of expression of my feelings,” she thought, melancholy. “If only I could look a little bit younger and prettier, I wonder if I could make him think of me.” Until that time, there had been no such thing as cosmetics (*keshō*),<sup>96</sup> but this lady put on white powder for the first time,<sup>97</sup> and mixed in crimson to show a blush and drew clear and beautiful eyebrows with eyebrow black and such. Looking so extraordinary, she went to serve the Emperor. The Emperor found her very appealing, and fell for her, and there and then she became his Empress.<sup>98</sup>

Ever since that time, when one person falls for another they write “cosmetic words,” and when they put their feelings in a letter and send it, it’s called a “cosmetic letter” or “*Keshō bumi*.”<sup>99</sup>

When she had spoken I asked, “How does a young person like you know of ancient times?”

She said, “As it’s my own name, don’t you think I’d know?” and made as if to go, but I said, “The lady I caught sight of in front of the *Kōkamon*<sup>100</sup> was very charming, and I can’t forget her.”

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<sup>96</sup> This is an example of *kojiseigo* 故事成語, the phrase resulting from an anecdote which usually connects previously unrelated things to explaining a popular word or phrase. This device was popular in medieval literature.

<sup>97</sup> The original text is unclear as to whether this is a powder or a paint. The story simply uses the word *mono* 物 (“thing”).

<sup>98</sup> Lit. “stood as” his Empress.

<sup>99</sup> The pun in *keshō bumi* is based on the visual pun of *keshō* 化粧 meaning “makeup” and *kesō* 懸想 meaning “to fall in love” (*keshō* is also a now-obsolete spelling for this word). Note that the whole paragraph relies on this kanji pun, which is in turn reliant on the reader’s knowledge of the kanji characters, because they are not present in the text.

<sup>100</sup> The text reads *Kankamon* くわんかもん, which is likely an error for *Kōkamon* くわうかもん.

“If that’s the case, I will pick a good day and bring her in. Keep your thoughts faithful to her,” she said. I promised to over and over again happily, and she left.

After that, I waited with an unsettled heart through the days and nights until the day finally came. There was the sound of a carriage arriving, and when I looked out happily, I saw that the situation was a little different from what I had expected. There were many others with her, including ladies and samurai, and it was all very stylish. Among them were some to hold umbrellas to keep the rain off of her. Although the ladies descending from the carriage were all extremely elegant and refined, I noticed that there were some with twisted necks, and some with beautiful rounded faces. There were all kinds and many beautiful things, and my eyes couldn’t take it all in.

When it came time for dawn to break, they got ready to leave. Even though it went against what was promised, I said “Won’t you let me hide you somewhere for a little while?”

Thus the night ended. In the light of day I saw that the one I had thought was the lady was, upon closer inspection, really a love letter written on fancy, fine paper. Those I had thought to be ladies were also love letters written on white fine paper. Those with twisted necks were tied letters, and the samurai were a bunch of ancient writing brushes. The one that appeared to be holding the umbrella was a decorated brush,<sup>101</sup> and the thing I had thought to be a carriage was in fact a box for writing brushes.

It was an endlessly surprising and mysterious thing. Wondering about it, I thought, it’s as I expected! It made one consider ordinary people’s promises to be very shallow. Looking at the letters, I saw that although they were the traces of many long years, they were unusual and

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<sup>101</sup> The word for ‘decorated brush’ can also mean enchanted brush.

so they could not be the work of people of this world. As I wondered whose magical properties they might be, I had a dream even though I hadn't quite dozed off.

*How sad that only the calligraphy of Narihira remains as a memento of the stories of old,* a voice said, and I realized that they must be Narihira's letters. I thought about it, becoming more and more melancholy. The go-between had been an incarnation of the Fuji Bodhisattva,<sup>102</sup> taking pity on hearts in love.

In all things, the heart in love, when it is passionate, can cause even plants and trees without hearts to take a human form, and cause traces of the brush which have no form to show their feelings. What extraordinary things these are!

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<sup>102</sup> This likely refers to the Bodhisattva Kannon.

## Conclusion

My intent with this thesis was to provide additional translations to add to those available in modern English research on *otogi-zōshi*. For this reason I consider my literary analyses to be preliminary, and I hope that by translating these tales I have raised some questions to stimulate further research. There are many aspects of *iruimono* which I have not been able to explore. As discussed earlier, *irui* characters are not limited to *otogi-zōshi* or even to Japanese literature. Placing *iruimono* in the broader context of world mythology and literature might provide a better understanding of what caused this subcategory of *otogi-zōshi* to develop. Concerning the analysis of *iruimono* in Japanese literature, it would also be useful to compare *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi* to other *iruimono*. Limiting the scope to plant tales in particular would be helpful, but a comparison of plant *iruimono* to a broader range of works involving animals, spirits, or inanimate objects might help us understand if there is any fundamental difference in the way different types of *irui* characters are treated in *otogi-zōshi*. Ichiko Teiji has noted that tales involving plants tend to be melancholy and romantic relationships between plants and humans end badly for the characters involved. This statement holds true for *Kazashi no himegimi* and to an extent for *Sakuraume no sōshi*, as discussed earlier, but it would be interesting to see if it continues to hold true under a broader examination involving more stories of the type.

Haruo Shirane's discussion of nature and *iruimono* makes it clear that the role of nature in Japanese literature is a very complex topic: this is also evident from the plots and characters of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*. The protagonist in each story occupies a space inside a home, and their only contact with nature as Shirane defines it is through their walks in their front garden. However, a garden is a maintained and controlled environment, and so it



does not fit Shirane's description of primary nature. According to his argument, the conflict this controlled environment creates may be what causes *irui* characters to appear to humans. As the focus of this thesis is on the presentation of the translations it was not possible to go into the topic in great detail. I have summarized his arguments briefly, but I would suggest that his ideas of primary nature and secondary nature deserve more considered analysis in regards to *otogi-zōshi* and *iruimono*. A closer examination of concepts of nature in Japanese literature and culture through time could provide a greater understanding of the stories presented here, and might present some reasons why plant *irui* came to exist in Japanese literature.

From the interactions between *irui* characters and the protagonists in the translations given in this thesis, we can also see that the concepts of spirits and of transformation are important aspects of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*. Because the Lesser Captain is a spirit, he is able to transform into a human to have a relationship with Himegimi; but why was this story appealing to Japanese readers, and what traditions does it build from? A study of the history and effects of a related concept, animism, on literary arts and the development of *irui* characters in other art forms might provide some answers. What we might also consider is the status of humans compared to *irui* characters. In this thesis, I have primarily discussed *irui* characters' supernatural powers their allure for humans. However, one could also examine why *irui* characters seek out humans, and this might provide a better sense of the relationship between them.

I have also only briefly touched on the Buddhist aspects of *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*, and much more remains to be explored. For example, *issai shujō shitsu ubusshō* 一切衆生悉有仏性, a doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism that teaches that all living things have the potential for Buddhahood, is certainly applicable to the plant characters in these

two stories. A more thorough examination of these stories with a Buddhist perspective might provide clues as to why *irui* characters developed and what their religious connection is to the producers of these texts. This in turn might help us better understand the connection between humans in and *irui* characters in general.

Finally, in order to analyze *otogi-zōshi* in most cases, it is vital to consider the visual elements that are integral to these texts. It may be even more important to do so for *iruimono*, since they are centered on supernatural subjects. However, it did not make sense to provide image analysis in this thesis, considering that the images for *Sakuraume no sōshi* are presumed lost and it would therefore unbalance the analysis. In the future an analysis of the visual elements of *Kazashi no himegimi* would be useful, and a comparison of the art for various *iruimono* tales might help give us a better understanding of the category.

I hope that by providing more translations for English research, I am facilitating a discussion of the role of plant *irui* characters in *otogi-zōshi* and in Japanese culture and literary history. The subject of plant *irui* characters, while rare in *otogi-zōshi*, can be found in other Japanese literary and art forms and in the art and literature of other cultures around the world. By providing translation and analysis for *Kazashi no himegimi* and *Sakuraume no sōshi*, I hope to open up the discussion of plant *irui* characters in *otogi-zōshi* for examination in a broader context.

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