

PRINCESS SHOKUSHI'S POETRY AND ITS ALLUSIONS TO WOMEN'S UNSEEN
NARRATIVES IN THE GENJI MONOGATARI

by

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Abstract

This thesis aims to offer a scholarly approach to the poetics of Princess Shokushi, one of Japan's most celebrated and influential female poets of the pre-modern era. Princess Shokushi is generally regarded as a poet of imagination, mainly because she wrote a number of passionate love poems despite her lifelong celibacy, imposed on her by her position as imperial princess. While some scholars conclude that Shokushi's poetry came from her mastery of the traditional craft and a vigorous poetic imagination, others see her poetry as the personal expression of her innermost feelings and life experiences. Focusing on this controversy over whether or not her poetry is, in fact, based on real life experiences or merely invented—which some claim she did by exploiting the poetic conventions of the Japanese male poets of the day—this paper explores Shokushi's distinctive poetic expression through her use of the literary technique called *honka-dori*, allusive variation. This research pays special attention to the poems that allude to *The Tale of Genji* and reveals how Shokushi's frequent allusions to this tale and its characters signal her profound interest in the story beyond the conventional literary trends of her time. Shokushi often refers to the specific female characters in her poems—Ôigimi, Ukifune, and Lady Murasaki—, abandoned imperial princesses, whose lack of strong family support leaves them in close confinement deep in the mountains. By examining Shokushi's poetry in the contexts of this narrative, ultimately, this paper will show how, in alluding to these female characters, Shokushi not only furthers her own image as an isolated imperial princess, but also throws light on these female characters' inner sufferings, which are unknown to the male characters with whom they associate.

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Introduction

One of the most prominent female poets of the late Heian and Kamakura periods, Princess Shokushi (1149¹-1201), was born as the third daughter to Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127-1192). As imperial princess, Shokushi witnessed the gradual decline of aristocratic society and the rise of the warrior class, which was accompanied by a series of armed struggles for political power. In addition to the political turmoil she endured throughout her lifetime, Shokushi experienced many misfortunes in her family life. Her mother, Fujiwara no Seishi, had two princes and four princesses with Go-Shirakawa: out of all his consorts, she bore the largest number of offspring, but never attained the position of Empress, the first imperial consort, nor even that of *nyōgo*, the second rank for imperial consorts.² All of Seishi's children, except for her second son, Prince Mochihito, were assigned to serve at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines from an early age, which meant they surrendered their royal and "other important positions," due to the ongoing political intrigues over the throne.³ Shokushi spent eleven years of her early life as a high priestess, called Saiin, at the Kamo Shrine and remained single all her life. After she resigned this post because of illness, Shokushi lost her family members, one after another: her mother and younger sister both died of poor health, and her brother, Prince Mochihito, who attempted to rebel against the military Taira clan, was killed at the age of twenty-nine.⁴ Without strong family support or any "official position at court, [Shokushi] spent her adult life in an unsettled migration from residence to residence in

¹ Shokushi's birth date has long been contested, but recent new evidence confirms that she was born in 1149. See the argument in Ishikawa Yasumi. "Shokushi Naishinnō shū" in *Waka Bungaku Taikei*. 23. (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin., 2001), p. 231.

² Baba Akiko. *Shikishi Naishinnō*. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1992), p. 29.

³ Sato Hiroaki. *String of Beads: Complete Poems of Princess Shikishi* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 10.

⁴ Takenishi Hiroko. *Shikishi Naishinnō, Eifukumon'in*. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō., 1972), p. 44.

the capital.”⁵ Despite the fact that we can trace some of the information discussed above through various historical records and literary texts, little of Shokushi’s life is actually known, except for her poems, of which three hundred and ninety-nine remain today.

Princess Shokushi is typically known for her masterful use of the poetic imagination, mainly due to a number of passionate love poems she wrote, despite her alleged lifelong celibacy, a condition imposed upon her by her position as imperial princess and former Saiin. Paradoxically, however, in spite of her traditional image as a poet of “imagination,” many modern readers and scholars have often interpreted her poetry as autobiographical, seeing them as the personal expression of her innermost feelings and life experiences. Hence, even among Japanese scholars, the autobiographical interpretation of her work remains intensely controversial. Focusing on this controversy over whether or not her poetry is, in fact, based on real life experiences or merely invented, the first part of this paper explores Shokushi’s distinctive poetic expression in terms of her use of the literary technique called *honka-dori*, or allusive variation, focusing particularly on the poetic theme of mountain seclusion. I shall illustrate how Shokushi cultivates her poetic sensibility in the early part of her career as a poet, while learning about the application of *honka-dori* under the tutelage of her poetry teacher, Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204).

In relation to the specific theme of mountain seclusion, this paper further explores how Shokushi’s poetry frequently alludes to particular scenes in a lonely mountain village from *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*, [c 1000]). In order to tease out Shokushi’s reinvention of poetic voice on the same poetic theme throughout her career as

⁵ Laurel Rasplica Rodd. “Shikishi Naishinnô” in *Medieval Japanese Writers*. Ed. Steven D. Carter. (Detroit: Brucoli, Clark, Layman, Inc.), p. 261.

a court poet, this paper will focus on Shokushi's specific poems from three sequences of a hundred poems, known as Sequences A, B, and C, which were probably completed around 1169, 1190 and 1200, respectively.⁶ This paper also pays close attention to the poems Shokushi composed in different time periods that allude to a specific chapter from the Uji chapters, called "Hashihime" (The Maiden of the Bridge), in order to reveal her constant interest in this chapter and its characters, beyond the literary conventions of her day. I shall bring attention to how her poems often allude to the specific female character in this chapter, named Ôigimi, who reminds the readers of Shokushi's own social standing. Through an analysis of the poems in which she refers to Princess Ôigimi, I will attempt to show not only how Shokushi's use of *honka-dori* furthers her own image as an isolated, tragic princess but also how she creates a female persona as a way to distance herself from her own poetic expression, thereby enabling her to express genuine feelings of anguish in her poems under the guise of the tale's heroine. I will suggest that Shokushi uses the "Hashihime" to contrast a noblewoman's sense of helplessness in a place of mountain seclusion, where she is forced to stay with nowhere else to go, and a nobleman's sense of loneliness in the same place, where he has *chosen* to develop his spiritual life.

The conclusion takes up Shokushi's frequent but indirect allusions to the female characters in *The Tale of Genji*. In this section, I will discuss the ongoing debate over the obscurity of Shokushi's allusive sources from the tale, which has led many Japanese scholars to attempt to determine the poems and narratives Shokushi alludes to in her

⁶ Almost all of Shokushi's extant poems take the form of three sequences of a hundred poems. The exact date of the compositions of each sequence is unknown. I settled on these dates by referring to Nishiki Hitoshi's argument in his book, *Chûsei Waka no Kenkyû* (Tokyo: Ôfû sha., 1991), p. 346, and Hiroaki Sato's introduction in *String of Beads*, p. 17. I also referred to Baba Akiko's book, *Shikishi naishinnô*, in which Baba argues that Sequence A was composed when Shokushi was in her late teens.

poems. Despite controversy, the scholarly consensus is that Shokushi often refers to this story's important male characters, in an attempt to represent their feelings in her poems. Through an analysis of the contested allusive sources, this paper will show how close attention to the scenes in which she alludes to these male characters leads to an awareness of the presence of the equally important female characters behind the main narratives about these heroes. Through an examination of Shokushi's poems that allude to these popular male characters, I will also demonstrate how all the female characters share the characteristic of being abandoned princesses who not only lack the protection of their parents, but who also suffer from the infidelity of the male characters with whom they are associated, eventually leading to their further abandonment. By examining Shokushi's poetry and her use of *honka-dori* from the contexts of *The Tale of Genji*, this paper will show that one of Shokushi's main purposes in alluding to this particular tale is to emphasize the unseen narrative of these women and their hidden sufferings that are unknown to the heroes. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how, through her poems, Shokushi quietly but emphatically encourages her readers to turn their attention to the women's emotional side of life and its enduring value in this most famous romance of the Japanese literary tradition.

The influence of Shunzei and Teika on Shokushi's *honka-dori*

In most of her poems, Princess Shokushi applies a key poetic convention of the time, *honka-dori*, through which Shokushi's contemporaries frequently alluded to past works of Japanese literature, as well as Chinese poetry (漢詩 *kanshi*), in order to add depth of meaning and complexity to the poem. Shokushi's mentor, Fujiwara no Shunzei, played a crucial role in creating distinctive literary trends of the era by enhancing Japanese literary traditions with new poetic values, which were later refined by his son, Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241). Among the poetic innovations developed by these two male poets was *honka-dori*, upon which Shunzei is known to be "the first poet to look approvingly" and to use the term *honka* (a foundation poem) in a judgment of a imperially sponsored poetry contest, known as the *Miidera shiragi no yashiro utaawase* (三井寺新羅社歌合, 1173).⁷ Although the application of *honka-dori* is seen in the earliest imperial anthology, *Kokinwakashû*, poet-scholars before Shunzei had never elaborated on the poetics of this technique, but discussed it only in terms of "*nusumu* (to steal)...or *manebiyomu* (to imitate), which clearly reflected their reluctance to encourage, if not outright condemn, the practice."⁸ In his essay, "Voice, Text, and The Question of Poetic Borrowing in Late Classical Japanese Poetry," David T. Bialock points out three distinct aspects of *honka-dori* that Shunzei encourages any worthy poets to follow: "1) the positioning of borrowed phrases; 2) what sources to borrow from (here his main concern was to discourage from borrowing from recent poets); 3) the importance of changing the topic of the poem from which one is borrowing."⁹ Shunzei's approach to the practice, however, remained

⁷ David T. Bialock. "Voice, Text, and The Question of Poetic Borrowing in Late Classical Japanese Poetry." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 1. (Jun., 1994, pp. 181-231), p. 216.

⁸ Ibid, p. 216.

⁹ Ibid, p. 217.

tentative; his focus was not on developing any specific rules, but only on commenting on the application of *honka-dori* in a broad manner. Shunzei's poetics were inherited by his son, Teika, who gradually reshaped and elaborated the rules by updating his father's approaches in his three poetic treatises, *Kindaishûka* (近代秀歌, 1209), *Eiga taigai* (詠歌大概, 1216), and *Maigetsushô*¹⁰ (毎月抄, 1219). The three major developments in Teika's new poetics on *honka-dori* are: 1) You may use words from the olden days, but the heart of your expression should be new . . . (詞は古きを慕ひ、心は新しきを求め . . . *kotoba wa furuki wo shitagai*, *kokoro wa atarashiki wo motome*...).¹¹ 2) "Under no circumstances is it permissible to use expressions which were first employed in poems of the last seventy or eighty years." (七八十年以来人之歌、所詠出之詞努々不可取用

shichihachijûnen irai no hito no uta, yomi izuru tokoro no kotoba yumeyume tori

mochiyuru bekarazu)¹² 3) The following is one of the most detailed passages from Teika's poetics concerning *honka-dori*:

In regard to the method of taking a foundation poem...it is only for the most accomplished poets to use a poem on cherry blossoms just as it is for one of their own on cherry blossoms, or a poem on the moon for one on the moon. Ordinarily, there should be some change—with a poem on spring used for one on autumn or winter, or a poem on love incorporated into one on a mixed or seasonal topic—yet done in such a way that it is clear one has used the older poem. Taking too many of the words of the foundation poem must be avoided. The proper method is perhaps to use two [stanzas] or so that seem to be the very essence of the poem and space them out between the upper and lower verses of the new one.

本歌取り侍るやうは...花の歌をやがて花によみ、月の歌をやがて月にてよむ事は、達者のわざなるべし。春の歌をば秋・冬などによみかへ、恋の歌をば雑や季の歌などにて、しかもその歌を取れるよと聞ゆるやうによみなすべきにて候。

¹⁰ There has been ongoing controversy over *Maigetsushô*, as some scholars challenge the authenticity of Teika's authorship.

¹¹ My translation is based on "Kindaishûka" in Fujihira Haruo, ed., *Karonshû*. SNKZ 87. (Tokyo: Shôgakkan., 2002), p. 451.

¹² "Eiga taigai" in *Karonshû*, 473. Trans. Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner. *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time: A Thirteenth-Century Poetic Treatise and Sequence*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1967), p. 46.

本歌の詞をあまりに多く取る事はあるまじきにて候。そのやうは、詮とおぼゆる詞二つばかりにて、今の歌の上下句にわかち置くべきにや。¹³

Through their poetics on *honka-dori*, Shunzei and Teika encouraged their followers to discover unique poetic expressions of their own, while learning from writers of the past and even borrowing some of their words, images and feelings, in order to create a new aesthetics in Japanese poetry. As contemporaries of Princess Shokushi, these two male poets no doubt influenced her *honka-dori* technique; however, scholars still debate the extent to which she adopted their approaches.

Many critics of Shokushi's poetry attempt to grasp her distinctive practice of borrowing from the writings of the past by comparing her use of *honka-dori* to that of her contemporaries, particularly Shunzei and Teika. In fact, the three poets often apply the same subject matter in their poems, upon which they build new poetic situations and moods of their own. One of these poetic subjects was the theme of mountain seclusion, which often included imagining oneself shut off from the outside world and living in an isolated mountain village. Shunzei was a strong advocate of the use of allusions to Chinese poetry, the original source of the theme of mountain seclusion, which was followed by a literary trend that saw reclusion as "an ideal way of life for Kamakura and Muromachi men of letters."¹⁴ In particular, among the Japanese court elite during the twelfth century, the works of a Chinese Tang dynasty poet, Bai Juyi ¹⁵ (白居易 772-846),

¹³ "Maigetsushô" in *Karonshû*, p. 502. Trans. Brower and Miner. *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time*. p. 46.

¹⁴ Michele Marra. *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 1991), p. 91.

¹⁵ Bai Juyi, known as *Hakurakuten* (白楽天) in Japanese, was a poet and government official of the Tang dynasty. In his early career as scholar-official, Bai wrote many poems criticizing the government, which resulted in his demotion to a lower rank, which caused him to leave Ch'ang-an (the capital) for a rural area. Having fewer official duties allowed him to spend "considerable times at various temples on nearby Mount Lu, practicing Ch'an or Zen-style meditation with the monks or engaging in other religious activities." See

not only gained overwhelming popularity but also profoundly influenced the Japanese literary traditions, both in prose writings (including *The Tale of Genji*) and poetry.¹⁶ In the following poem, Princess Shokushi is alluding to Bai's famous lines:¹⁷ "...me, here in Mount Lu on a rainy night, inside my thatched hut...."¹⁸ [庵山雨夜草庵中...¹⁹]. These are part of the poem Bai wrote to three of his friends back in the capital, all of whom, he imagines, are "beneath the embroidered curtains" enjoying each other's company and their glorified lives as government officials.²⁰ Through these verses, Bai conveys his rainy night melancholy and reminisces about the old days he spent with his friends, while living in his "thatched hut" on Mount Lu, where he finds a life of peace, separated from the political turmoil he experienced in the capital. Shokushi's poem below clearly demonstrates the influence of Teika's poetics on *honka-dori*: while borrowing poetic words from Bai Juyi, who lived more than three centuries before her, she makes them serve her own poetic vision, which is new in that it reflects the inner emotional life of a woman:

しづかなる草の庵の雨の夜をとふ人あらばあはれとや見む

*shizukanaru
kusa no iori no*

The rain falls through the dark
about my quiet grass-thatched hut, and

"Introduction" p. XI in *Po Chü-i: Selected Poems*. Trans. Burton Watson. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

¹⁶ The most often alluded passages from Bai Juyi's works among the Heian court elite come from the long narrative poem, known as "The Song of Unending Sorrow," the tragic love story about a legendary beauty, Yang Guifei, and the Chinese Emperor Xuanzong (685-762). Murasaki Shikibu frequently refers to this poem in the *Genji monogatari*, including two pivotal episodes, "Kiritsubo" and "Maboroshi," in which the heroes lament over the death of their beloved consorts. For a discussion on the immense influence of Bai's works on the *Genji monogatari*, see Nakanishi Susumu. *Genji Monogatari to Hakurakuten*. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997).

¹⁷ *Heian Kamakura Shika Shû*. Ed. Hisamatsu Senichi. Et al. in NKBT 80. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten., 1973), p. 373.

¹⁸ *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing. The Wakan rôei shû*. Translated and annotated by J. Thomas Rimer and Jonathan Chaves. (New York: Columbia University Press., 1997), p. 168.

¹⁹ "Hakushi monjû" (The Collected Works of Po Chüi) in *Shinshaku Kanbun Taikei* 100. Ed. Okamura Shigeru. (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1990), p. 82.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 82. The English translation follows the text in *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing.*, p. 168.

*ame no yo wo
tou hito araba
aware to ya min*

I wonder, if somebody were to visit
me here at a night like this,
how pitiful I might appear to him²¹

This is one of Shokushi's earliest poems from Sequence A, in which she imagines herself spending "a rainy night" (*ame no yo*) alone inside a "grass-thatched hut" (*kusa no iori*), a simple dwelling which symbolizes the isolation and desolation of life in lonely mountain villages. The rain falling about her "quiet" (*shizukanaru*) dwelling is the only sound she hears, which enhances the sense of pitiful misery of the speaker, because the sound of the rain signifies not only her tears of loneliness²² but also the fact that the rainfall is gradually damaging her already miserable hut. One of the most important elements in this poem, in fact, is Shokushi's new addition to Bai's poetic effect, which is her enduring wish to maintain her connection to the outside world. As the phrase, "if somebody were to visit me here at a night like this" (*yo wo tou hito araba*) indicates, Shokushi relies on her own imagination to make connections to the outside world; the thought that "somebody" "might" take notice of her and feel sympathy for her "pitiful" (*aware*) situation, consoles her. This poem clearly displays one of the distinctive features of Shokushi's treatment of *honka-dori*, in which she utilizes the poetic concept of *honka* in order to portray the seclusion of her own life in close confinement, from which she sends the outside world the message of her remaining hopes to find the value of her existence in the "real" world.

²¹ I referred to the first two lines of Brower's translation of Shunzei's poem shown in the next paragraph, in order to produce the matching lines between Shunzei's poem and the above poem by Shokushi. Moreover, the word "*hito*," which I translated as "somebody" and "him" here, literally means just "person" in Japanese and therefore does not indicate any specific gender. The Japanese transcription follows *Heian Kamakura shikashû*. in NKBT 80, p. 373.

²² Because the words *tsuyu* (dewdrops) and *kusa* (grass) were *engo* (associative words), the word *tsuyu* (including raindrops) was widely used in Japanese *waka* poetry to represent the tears of a person living in a "grass" hut. Katagiri Yôichi. *Utamakura Utakotoba Jiten* (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin., 1999), p. 136.

Some critics argue that Shokushi composed this poem in an attempt to represent Bai Juyi's feelings of loneliness and seclusion on Mount Lu, not imaging the seclusion of her own life. In fact, the controversy over whether or not Shokushi's poems are the results of pure craft, composed without the purpose of expressing her personal feelings, has provoked Oda Takeshi, for one, to deny the interpretation of most of her poems as the expression of her own personal feelings. Oda suggests that the poem above is merely an example of her habit of imitating her mentor, Shunzei, who actively adapted the ideals of Chinese poetry during his career as a poet.²³ Below is Shunzei's poem, in which he represents an old man's sentimentality about his recollection of the old days, while secluding himself off from the outside world in a lonely mountain village. Oda cites this as the source of Shokushi's inspiration for her poem:

*Mukashi omou
Kusa no iori no
Yoru no ame ni
Namida na soe so
Yamahototogisu*

I recollect the past
While the summer rain falls through the
dark
About my grass-thatched hut,
But *hototogisu*, singing at last among the
hills,
Do not call out a freshening of my tears.²⁴

Here, Shunzei takes Bai's poetic reference to the beauty of nature and Mount Lu and adds the feelings of sadness and loneliness "by having them apprehended by an aged speaker, meanwhile transferring the beauty of the mountain to the Japanese bird [*hototogisu*] whose song is so seldom heard."²⁵ Despite Shunzei's new additional poetic moods, Bai and Shunzei still share the poetic device of casting their own imaginations back into the distant past while living in mountain residences, a place of their own self-imposed

²³ Oda Takeshi. *Shokushi Naishinnô Zenka Chûshaku*. (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1995), p. 126.

²⁴ Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner. *Japanese Court Poetry*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press., 1961), p. 232.

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 232-3.

seclusion that brings them closer to nature and its beauty. When compared to this poem by Shunzei, it becomes clear that Shokushi's poetic approach to her position in the "reality" of her life, even as she imagines escaping from it, runs counter to the directions of Shunzei's. While Shunzei represents the discovery of peace in his life through his poetic depictions of mountain seclusion, which enabled him to turn away from the chaos of the "civilized" world, Shokushi chooses to contemplate a sense of solitude through imagining herself in close confinement deep in the mountains in order to express her hope of making her presence felt in the outside world. In any case, in the above poem, Shokushi signals her first attempts to find her own voice, one that is different from that of her mentor, Shunzei, whose influence is nonetheless strongly felt among her earliest poems.

As an inheritor of the poetic conventions established by his father, Teika also alludes to Bai Juyi's poem, on a parallel with Shokushi's poem. In the following poem, Teika follows his father's focus on an old man's musings about past memories and highlights the old man's feelings of solitude and confinement deep in the mountains by emphasizing his closer connection to the beauty of nature:

*Mukashi omou
Kusa ni yatsururu
Nokiba yori
Arishi nagara no
Aki no yo no tsuki*

I recollect the past:
Through my broken eaves now overgrown
With heavy grasses,
The moon streams down as ever
Radiant through the autumn night.²⁶

This poem illustrates Teika's typical use of *honka-dori*, through which he creates the depths of meaning and poetic moods that evoke his reader's feeling of desire to capture ungraspable feelings from the depths of loneliness. In order to create this "depth" or the sense of space in distance within his poems, Teika often alludes to Chinese poetry of the

²⁶ Ibid, p. 231.

past, in particular to that of Bai Juyi, whose poetry he held in highest regard.²⁷ The above poem reminds Robert H. Brower of the famous poem by Ariwara no Narihira from *The Tales of Ise*,²⁸ in which Narihira represents his lamentation over the end of the relationship with his lover. Narihira emphasizes his sense of solitude and loneliness as a rejected man through his creation of a poetic scene in which he is alone, gazing at the beautiful moon and plum blossoms. On the surface, his surroundings appear exactly the same as last year, but in fact, he grieves, that nothing remains the same, except for himself and his feelings for his lost lover. Through these multiple allusions to the poetry of Bai, Shunzei and Narihira in one poem, Teika adds depth to his own reminiscence of his past and its accompanying emotions, which embrace Bai and Shunzei's sentimentality about a past to which they can never return and Narihira's grief over his lover who will never come back to him. With these profound and complex representations of loss, Teika focuses solely on the "broken" connections to the people he cared about in his past, without expressing any desire or need to restore those connections, the desire that can be seen in Shokushi's poem, as discussed earlier. Akahane Shuku, who, in *Fujiwara Teika no kafû*, gives a thorough analysis of Teika's distinctive poetic voice, illustrates how, in his poems, Teika often imagines himself kept in close confinement inside a space remote from reality, such as a distant space that belongs to the past.²⁹ Akahane argues that Teika's poems often show his careful deliberations in avoiding poetic representations that

²⁷ Akahane Shuku. *Fujiwara Teika no kafû*. (Tokyo: Ôfû sha., 1985), p. 205.

²⁸ Brower (p. 232) suggests that Teika is alluding to the following poem:

<i>tsuki ya aranu</i>	Is this not that moon,
<i>haru ya mukashi no</i>	this spring not as much the spring
<i>haru naranu</i>	as that other, then,
<i>wa ga mi hitotsu wa</i>	while I alone linger on,
<i>moto no mi ni shite</i>	the one I have always been.

*Translation by Royall Tyler, from his new translation of *The Tales of Ise*.

²⁹ Akahane. *Fujiwara Teika no kafû*, p. 390.

are too direct or realistic, but instead chooses to reflect on what was once there but is not there anymore.³⁰ In an analysis of all the arguments above, especially through a comparison between Shokushi and Teika's poems, which both build on the poetic content of their mentors, Bai and Shunzei, we can observe how Shokushi's poetic expression shows her attempts to develop her poetic skills and find her own voice by representing the feelings of isolation in places of seclusion differently from her male contemporaries. Consequently, while following the literary trends of her day, especially the conventions established by her teacher, Shunzei, and his son, Teika, Shokushi's poetry gives a new resonance to the literary tradition of representations of mountain seclusion, through its manifestation of her innermost desire and deep longing to transform her unbearable world into a place of hope.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 390.

Shokushi's poetry and its allusions to the chapter "Hashihime"

Throughout her career as a court poet, Princess Shokushi portrayed the sense of solitude as a feature of human life in many of her poems. It is through her use of *honka-dori* that Shokushi frequently refers to the scenes of a lonely mountain village in *The Tale of Genji*, in order to evoke the sense of profound loneliness and harsh living conditions in a place of seclusion. *The Tale of Genji* was in fact one of the most popular sources of allusion among her contemporaries, and many modern scholars agree that this trend may be attributed to Shunzei's remark in the *Ropyyakuban utaawase* (1193): "Murasaki Shikibu is more skilled as a prose writer than as a poet. The chapter "Hana no en" (Under the Cherry Blossoms) is particularly profound and evocative. Any poets who do not read the *Genji monogatari* are deplorable."³¹ Shunzei never clearly states *how* the poets should allude to the *Genji*, but only suggests that one must refer to this narrative circuitously, saying that "it is bad to compose a poem relying solely on the *Genji monogatari*."³² According to an annotator of the *Ropyyakuban utaawase*, Kubota Jun, what Shunzei might be trying to say through this second comment is that poets must first seek *honka* or foundation poems in *Kokinwakashû*, the first imperial anthology of *waka* poetry, which the *Genji monogatari* often uses as its allusive source.³³ To what extent Shunzei's poetics specifically advocate using *The Tale of Genji* as allusive sources is still controversial; however, as the first comment by Shunzei above suggests, he regarded the *Genji* as essential reading for poets, because of its often "en" or "profound and

³¹ The Japanese transcription follows Kubota Jun and Yamaguchi Akiho, eds., *The Ropyyakuban utaawase*. SNKT 38. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), p. 187. The original Japanese : 紫式部、歌詠みの程よりも物書く筆は殊勝也。其上、花の宴の巻は、殊に艶なる物也。源氏見ざる歌詠みは遺憾事也。The translation is mine.

³² My translation is based on Ibid., p. 103. The original Japanese: 偏に源氏を思ひて詠める、しかるべからず。

³³ Ibid, p. 103.

evocative” quality. *En* 艶 was a concept derived from the Chinese word “*yôen*” 妖艶, which literally translates as “mysterious and profound” and was used in Chinese poetry to describe the most beautiful objects, such as flowers and women.³⁴ Shunzei’s poetry teacher, Fujiwara no Mototoshi (-1142), was the first poet-scholar who applied the word *yôen* in his judgements of Japanese poetry, and his literary successors, Shunzei and Teika, regarded *yôen* or *en* as one of the central aesthetics in their own poetic treatises and judgments.³⁵ Joshua S. Mostow notes that the poems Teika referred to as having a *yôen* effect or ethereal beauty (and therefore of superior quality) are those that “evoke a common response in the reader—namely, to imagine a narrative context (such as the *Genji monogatari*) in which such poems would be appropriate.”³⁶ Akahane Shuku also demonstrates that Teika’s poems reveal his choice to avoid making direct allusions to the *Genji*, except in cases in which the poems he was writing had similarly evocative settings or contexts.³⁷ Contrary to Teika, who gradually established his career as a poet by reshaping the poetics of his mentors, especially his father, Shunzei, Princess Shokushi often reveals her attempts to take different paths from her mentor, Shunzei. The following poem is one of these examples, Shokushi’s earliest poem from Sequence A, in which she is alluding *directly* to *The Tale of Genji*. This poem illustrates her typical use of *honka-dori*, in which she builds upon the poetic meaning of specific words from *honka* to explain the anguish of a woman in enforced confinement:

跡絶ていくへもかすめふかく我世を宇治山の奥のふもとに

³⁴ Umeno Kimiko. *Ôchô no Biteki Goi En to sono Shûhen Zoku*. [Aesthetic vocabularies of the court: “*En*” and its associations, the sequel] (Tokyo: Shinten Sha, 1995), p. 35.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 38.

³⁶ Joshua S. Mostow. *Pictures of the Heart: The Hyakunin Isshu in Word and Image*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996), p. 42.

³⁷ Akahane. *Fujiwara Teika no kafû*, p.150.

<i>ato taete</i>	No footsteps echo here—
<i>ikue mo kasume</i>	O the thick layers of haze!
<i>fukaku waga</i>	Let my world bury itself further into
<i>yo o Uji-yama no</i>	obscurity, at the foot of
<i>oku no fumoto ni</i>	the interior of the Uji Mountain ³⁸

In this poem, Shokushi is alluding to the following poem of Hachi no Miya, (a half-brother of the story's hero, Genji), which appears in the chapter "Hashihime".

跡絶えて心すむとはなけれども世を宇治山に宿をこそ借れ

<i>ato taete</i>	No footsteps echo here—
<i>kokoro sumu towa</i>	it is not that this enables me to attain
<i>nakeredomo</i>	enlightenment; I only deplore
<i>yo o Uji-yama ni</i>	this world from my temporary
<i>yado o koso kare</i>	hut on the Uji Mountain ³⁹

One of the most prominent features of this *honka* is Hachi no Miya's pessimistic view of "this world." In court life, full of upsetting events, including the death of his most beloved wife, Hachi no Miya found this world unbearable (*yo o uji*), which eventually led to his decision to seclude himself in Uji Mountain (*Uji-yama*). By alluding to the specific location of "*Uji-yama*", where Hachi no Miya keeps himself in close confinement and "deplore[s] this world," Shokushi places great emphasis on her feelings of isolation and loneliness in the poem. The word "*uji*" furthers this sense of isolation, since it sounds like "*ushi*" in Japanese, which means "depressing," "melancholy," and "gloomy."⁴⁰ Her usage of *honka-dori* in this poem demonstrates how Shokushi frequently takes specific words from *honka* and makes them serve her desire to express her innermost feelings.

³⁸ The Japanese transcriptions of Shokushi's poems here and below follow *Heian Kamakura Shika Shû*. in NKBT 80. All translations in this paper are my own unless otherwise indicated.

³⁹ My translation is based on Ibid., p. 362. In this poem, Hachi no Miya is alluding to the famous poem on the Uji Mountain by Kisen Hôshi (mid-ninth century):

<i>waga iho ha</i>	My hut is to
<i>miyako no tatsu-mi</i>	the capital's southeast
<i>shika zo sumu</i>	and thus I live. But
<i>yo wo ujhi-yama to</i>	people call it "Uji, hill
<i>hito ha ifu nari</i>	of one weary of the world," I hear. (Mostow, <i>Pictures of the Heart</i> , p. 165.)

⁴⁰ Sato, *String of Beads*, p. 33.

For example, in Hachi no Miya's poem, the meaning of the word "yo" is somewhat oblique, since it can indicate either the world in general or the poet's own living conditions. Within the contexts of the narrative in which the character, Hachi no Miya, composes this poem, however, the word "yo" represents the outside world, especially court society, which caused him constant pain and misery in the past. In Shokushi's poem, on the other hand, an additional personal pronoun, "waga" (meaning "my" or "my own"), adds the same word "yo" to specify her own living conditions, since the expression "waga yo" literally means "my world."⁴¹ While on a superficial level, she appears simply to follow the literary technique of *honka-dori*, which builds upon Hachi no Miya's feeling of "gloom" in a secluded mountain village, the underlying impression of her final product is the dramatization of her own living conditions within a secluded and lonely "palace." While some scholars might view Shokushi's allusion to Hachi no Miya's poem as an example of her habit of imitating male poetic conventions, that is, using her mind instead of her heart, others understand that all pupils imitate their teachers at first and that the poem, in fact, signals her first attempts to find a voice through which she can express her genuine anguish.

In this manner, Shokushi creates a female poetic persona or alter-ego in her poems who is kept in close confinement but imagines herself deep in the mountains through diverse allusions to the secluded life of Hachi no Miya's residence on the Uji Mountain. In the "Hashihime" chapter, the Uji chapters' hero, Kaoru, motivated by his deep respect for Hachi no Miya's religious life, sets out to visit Hachi no Miya in his mountain home.

⁴¹ The word "waga yo" can be still interpreted as the world in general, such as "the world where I belong." However, within the context of this particular poem of Shokushi's, it is no doubt that adding the word "waga" helps emphasize her own living conditions and therefore the sense of isolation and loneliness in her own life.

Three years after his first visit to Uji, Kaoru catches a glimpse of Hachi no Miya's two daughters during their father's absence and is completely fascinated by their noble beauty. Eventually, he becomes smitten with love for the elder sister, Ôigimi. One of the main points of this chapter is the beginning of Kaoru's obsessive and unrewarded love for Ôigimi, who refuses to accept his love up to the very end of her life. The following is another poem from Sequence A, which evokes a passage from "Hashihime" and depicts the feelings of gloom and misery at Uji, where people have to endure severely cold weather from late autumn to winter in the lonely mountain village:

ま柴つむ宇治の河舟よせ侘ぬ竿の雫もかつ氷つゝ

<i>mashiba tsumu</i>	Piled with brushwood,
<i>Uji no kawabune</i>	a boat is laboring through
<i>yose wabinu</i>	the Uji River—unable to touch
<i>sao no shizuku mo</i>	the shore—drops of water from
<i>katsu kōritsutsu</i>	its oar keep turning to ice

Below is the *honketsu* (the foundation narrative) of this poem, which appears immediately after Kaoru steals his first peek at Hachi no Miya's two daughters. In this scene, even though Kaoru is aware that it is inappropriate for him to stay in Hachi no Miya's residence during the master's absence, he is reluctant to leave and sends a poem to Ôigimi. Soon he receives her poetic reply, which captures his heart:

[Kaoru] moved to the west end of the front side of [Hachi no Miya's] house, which the watchman had made ready for him, and there he gave himself up to gloomy musings, [while looking at the Uji River]. "There is a great commotion at the weir," one of his men observed. "The spirit seems not really to be in it, though—I suppose the fish are not actually coming." They seemed to know all about it. [Humble] boats piled with cut

brushwood were passing up and down, each man aboard intent on his poor labors, and the way they glided by at the mercy of the waters reminded him that life holds similar dangers for all. Am I to imagine that their peril in this world is not mine, and that I live secure in a jeweled palace? He asked himself time and again.

He called for an inkstone and sent [Ôigimi the following poem],

“What drops wet these sleeves, when the river boatman’s oar, skimming the shallows, sounds out the most secret heart of the Maiden of the Bridge!

You are in a sad reverie, I know.” He gave it to the watchman, who took it there, blue with cold.

Although embarrassed over her paper’s rather common scent, [Ôigimi] felt that what mattered most was a swift reply:

“These drops day and night while the Uji ferryman plies the running river soak these ever-moistened sleeves till they may soon rot away.

I am all but floating.”

It was very prettily written.⁴²

宿直人がしつらひたる西面におはして、眺めたまふ、網代は、人さわがしげなり、されど、氷魚も寄らぬにやあらむ、すさまじげなるけしきなり、と、御供の人びと見知りていふ、あやしき舟どもに、柴かりつみ、おのおのなにとなき世のいとなみどもに、行きかふさまどもの、はかなき水の上に浮かびたる、たれも思へば同じことなる世のつねなさなり、われはうかばず、玉の台に静けき身、と思ふべき世かは、と、思ひつゝ⁴³ けらる、

⁴² Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*. Vol. 2. Trans. Royall Tyler (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), pp. 840-1.

すゝり召して、あなたにきこえたまふ、

橋姫の心を汲みて高瀬さす棹のしづくに袖ぞ濡れぬる

ながめたまふらむかし、

とて、とのゐ人に持たせたまへり、いとさむげに、いらゝぎたる顔しても

てまゐる、御かへり、かみのかなどおぼろけならむ恥づかしげなるを、と

きをこそかかる折には、とて、

さしかへる宇治の川長あさゆふのしづくや袖をくたしはつらむ

身さへ、うきて、

と、いとをかしげに書きたまへり、⁴³

In his poem, Kaoru refers to Ôigimi as “the Maiden of the Bridge” (*hashihime*) and extends his sympathy toward her harsh living conditions at Uji, where people must struggle to survive their everyday lives, being “at the mercy of” their environment. Kaoru further expresses his desire to understand and “sound out” the depth of loneliness Ôigimi must have sunk into over the years while confined in her father’s mountain residence, a place disconnected from the outside world or “a jeweled palace” where Kaoru resides. In Ôigimi’s reply poem, she identifies herself with “the Uji ferryman” and her life with his “boat,” the boat she never knows how to navigate, thereby having to leave it afloat on uncertain waters. The ferryman’s decaying “sleeves” are, therefore, Ôigimi’s own, which are soaked with the “drops” of her tears, which are slowly eroding her life, causing it to “rot away” on the Uji Mountain. The word “boat” in Shokushi’s poem also indirectly refers to the life of Ôigimi, who laments over the uncertainty of her

⁴³ *Genji Monogatari Hyôshaku*. Vol. 10. Ed. Tamagami Takuya. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1967), pp. 113-5.

existence as an imperial princess, and who feels set adrift like a boat left to navigate unknown waters on her own, without strong family support. Ôigimi has already lost her mother, and the only other person she could rely on, Hachi no Miya, has decided to abandon worldly affairs and take a religious path. In this poem, Shokushi describes the “boat” as being “unable to touch the shore,” referring to Ôigimi’s feeling of not being able to reach “the shore”—the stable and secure stage of her life. Furthermore, by having the “drops” of Ôigimi’s tears turn “to ice” in the poem, Shokushi dramatizes the heroine’s tragic condition of drifting through life helplessly, by emphasizing the severe weather conditions that turn her tears to ice. Notably, Ôigimi’s social standing is, in fact, comparable to Shokushi’s: Ôigimi is an imperial princess without strong family support, who is expected to put the sanctity of her social position above her personal feelings, an obligation that destines her to remain single all her life. In the context of this narrative, we can detect how Shokushi highlights her own image as an isolated, abandoned princess by alluding to this particular chapter, “Hashihime.” This close analysis of Shokushi’s poems enables us to suggest that, through her use of *honka-dori*, Shokushi attempts to find a way to express the genuine feelings of pain and sorrow, while still being objective about her own poetic expression.

Controversy over Shokushi's allusive sources from monogatari

Despite Shokushi's constant interest in the "Hashihime" chapter throughout her career as a poet, her allusions to it became increasingly obscure and complex as her superior skills at *honka-dori* in her later years made it difficult to identify the subject matter of her poems, even by scholars. Many scholars agree, however, that Shokushi's allusions to *The Tale of Genji* almost always involve the male characters, regardless of the different time periods in which the poems were written. For example, in Gotô Shôko's essay, "Joryû ni yoru otokouta—Shikishi Naishinnô ka e no ichi shiten" (Men's poems in women's hands—one perspective on Princess Shokushi's poetry), she examines an assumption popular in Shokushi's day that many female poets composed their poems in the voices of male personae.⁴⁴ Gotô argues that Shokushi, too, identified herself with the male characters in the *Genji monogatari*, temporally forgetting to be a woman.⁴⁵ To support her argument, Gotô refers to Oda Takeshi, who also suggests that the *Genji monogatari* characters Shokushi most often alludes to are the story's male heroes, such as Genji.⁴⁶ Many specialists on Shokushi's poetry, such as Oda Takeshi and Nishiki Hitoshi, then conclude that Shokushi must have produced her poetry as a "professional," distancing her personal feelings from her works of art.⁴⁷ In the following poem from Sequence C, which exemplifies the obscurity and complexity of her later poems, Shokushi depicts Hachi no Miya's feeling of isolation in his mountain residence at Uji:

我宿はつま木こり行山賤のしばへへ通ふ跡ばかりして

⁴⁴ Gotô Shôko. "Joryû ni yoru otokouta—Shikishi Naishinnô ka e no ichi shiten" in *Heian Bungaku Ronshû*. (Tokyo: Kazama Shobô, 1992), p. 323.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 321.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 320.

⁴⁷ See the arguments in Nishiki Hitoshi, *Chûsei Waka no Kenkyû*, p. 353., and Oda Takeshi in *Shokushi Naishinnô Zenka Chûshaku*. (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1995), p. 578.

*waga yado wa
tsumaki koryuku
yamagatsu no
shibashiba kayou
ato bakari shite*

Around my abode comes into
sight no one, only the traces
left by mountain rustics, who,
gathering brushwood,
often wander in and out

This poem echoes the following narrative from “Hashihime”: “No one comes to visit this dwelling [of Hachi no Miya], even more so due to its location deep within layers of mountains. Only low-class servants or mountain rustics infrequently come to serve his needs.” [いとど、山かさなれる御すみかに、たづねまいる人なし、あやしきげすなど、いなかびたる山がつどものみ、まれになれ参りつかうまつる]⁴⁸ Here, with the minimal use of the word of “abode” (*yado*), which suggests the plainness of Hachi no Miya’s dwelling, Shokushi allows her readers to visualize a lonely mountain residence, where Hachi no Miya and his daughters live quietly in isolation, without expecting any visitors from the outside world. While Shokushi is not directly alluding to Hachi no Miya’s two daughters, this “abode” becomes center stage throughout the chapters following “Hashihime” and continuing to the “Agemaki” chapter, in which Kaoru’s obsessive love for Ôigimi comes to a tragic end with her early death. Before her death, Ôigimi suffers from the uncertain state of her fate while confined in her father’s “abode,” which is then described as a place of abandonment, where Ôigimi and Naka no Kimi are left helpless and alone, without the protection of their parents. Even though princes appear as knights-in-shining-armor to “save” these beautiful heroines, Ôigimi’s doubts about these men’s fidelity ultimately leads to even stronger feelings of isolation and abandonment, from which she dies of despair. Considering the significance of this “abode” as the centre stage of the first parts of the Uji chapters, the stage where Ôigimi and Naka no Kimi, who suffer from both a

⁴⁸ Oda, *Shokushi Naishinnô*, p. 411. The translation is mine.

lack of social support as imperial princesses and their doubts about the faithfulness and sincerity of the heroes who pursue them, Shokushi's poem, above, reveals the profound implications of her allusion to this passage in *The Tale of Genji*. In fact, as we will discuss further in the following paragraphs, a close analysis of the relation between Shokushi's poems and their allusive sources from *The Tale of Genji* often discloses her special interest in and deep sympathy toward the female characters who share common experiences as abandoned princesses.

The obscurity of her allusive sources has led many scholars to argue that she draws on different sources of *monogatari* for some of her poems on the topic of mountain residences (山家 *sanga*). In particular, the fact that some Heian *monogatari* share common narrative patterns and scenes with the *Genji monogatari*, due to its immense influence on many literary works that followed, makes it even more difficult for scholars to identify which scenes from which *monogatari* she may be alluding to in her poems. The following is one of the poems that has aroused controversy, in which Shokushi may be alluding to a passage either from the *Genji monogatari* or the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari*. In this poem from Sequence B, Shokushi captures the feelings of gloom and loneliness that keep a person awake through the night while in a place of mountain seclusion:

さらでだに思の絶えぬ冬の夜の松風ふけぬ霰乱れて

sarade dani
omoi no taenu
fuyu no yo no
matsukaze fukenu
arare midarete

On a winter night, already filled
with ceaseless thoughts of
melancholy, I hear the pine
wind blowing hard, confused
with hail flurrying through the air

Here, Shokushi intensifies the speaker's harsh living environment in close confinement in the depths of winter, by emphasizing the severe weather conditions that turn the raindrops into hailstones, which are "confused" [*"midarete"*] or mingled with "the pine wind" blowing hard. Here is a pun on the word "*midarete*" that is also used to highlight the speaker's "melancholy thoughts," which "confuse" and disturb her composure on a lonely winter night. The harder the wind roars among the pine forests as the night advances, the more such "thoughts" of melancholy and anxiety grow. In regard to this particular poem, Hiroaki Sato's note in his complete English translation of Shokushi's poems refers to Nishiki Hitoshi, who suggests a passage from the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari* as the allusive source for this poem. The following is Sato's translation of this passage, which appears in the third chapter of the tale, in which the story's hero, Chûnagon, visits the Yoshino Mountains, where he becomes overwhelmed with a feeling of isolation, looking around the night view of the desolate mountain village and hearing the sounds of a waterfall and the wind in the pine trees. The entire environment makes him wonder how people can choose to live in a place so remote from regular human habitation:

Even though [the village] was in the depth of mountains, some people evidently lived there. Still, Chûnagon felt terribly isolated—feeling very isolated indeed as he heard the sound of the waterfall boiling down the mountain right next to his ear, which was accompanied by the wind blowing through the pines. As he looked around, he was struck by an

awesome, piercing desolation, and he wondered how anyone could spend his days there...⁴⁹

ふかき山といへど、をのずから人の住むやうもありなんを、さすがにい
みじく心細くて、山よりたぎり落つる滝の音、耳近きに、松風の吹きあ
はせたる、心細さはいふかぎりなし。とばかりうち見めぐらすに、身に
しむばかりすごうさびしきに、いかでかくて過ぐし給ふらん。⁵⁰

Here, hearing “the wind blowing through the pines” at night, Chûnagon feels “terribly isolated” and wonders “how anyone could spend his days” in such an isolated, lonely place. Clearly, what Shokushi’s poem and this passage share is how the sound of the wind sighing in the pines at night evokes the human emotion of helplessness and loneliness when standing alone in wild nature. Notably, however, the narrative pattern, as observed in the above passage—a hero visiting a mountain residence where the only sound he hears is that of “waters” and “wind”—can be also seen in the Uji chapters of the *Genji monogatari*. In fact, many of the narrative motifs and characters that appear in the mountain village scenes in the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari* bear close parallels to those in the Uji chapters, showing the immense influence of the *Genji monogatari* on the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari*. For example, the *Hamamatsu*’s hero, Chûnagon plays a parallel role to that of the hero in the Uji chapters, Kaoru; they both experience the despair of the death of their most beloved women and, in an attempt to console their broken hearts, both love the deceased woman’s half-sister as a substitute, and this eventually leads them to being involved in a love triangle. The following is a

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 146.

⁵⁰ Nakanishi Kenji. *Hamamatsu Chûnagon Monogatari Zenchûshaku*. Volume 1. (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2005), p. 574.

passage from one of the Uji chapters, “Hashihime,” which parallels with the above lines from the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari*:

It was a sadder place than [Kaoru] had been led to imagine, and considering who [Hachi no Miya] was, everything about his life there suggested the drastic simplicity of the grass hut built to last little more than a day...here amid the roar of waters and the clamor of waves one seemed unlikely ever to forget one's cares or, at night amid the wind's dreary moan, to dream a consoling dream. Surroundings like these undoubtedly stir thoughts of renunciation in [Hachi no miya], [Kaoru] reflected, inclined as he is to seek a holy life, but how must they affect his daughters? He easily imagined them as having few of the common feminine graces.⁵¹

げに聞きしよりもあはれに、住まひたまへるさまよりはじめて、いとかりなる草のいほりに、思ひなし、ことそぎたり、同じき山里といえど、さる方にて心とまりぬべく、のどやかなるもあるを、いとあらましき水の音、波のひびきに、物忘れうちし、よるなど、心とけて夢をだに見るべきほどもなげに、すごくふきはらひたり、ひじりだちたる御ために、かかるしもこそ、心とまらぬもよほしならめ、女君たち、なにごちして過ぐしたまふらむ、世のつねの女しくなよびたる方は遠くやと、おいはからるる御ありさまなり、⁵²

Despite the strikingly similar contents, the passage from the *Genji Monogatari* reveals a closer resemblance to Shokushi's poem than that of the *Hamamatsu chûnagon monogatari*, in regard to how the sound of nature makes it difficult for a person in

⁵¹ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*. vol 2, p. 834.

⁵² Tamagami, ed. *Genji Monogatari*. Vol. 10, pp. 71-2.

mountain seclusion to “forget his/her cares” and have a “consoling” and peaceful night. In this passage, the narrator suggests how the sounds of nature in a mountain village takes on a different resonance for a person, depending on his/her life situation—For Hachi no Miya, the sound signifies his spiritual life at a place separated from the outside world full of political intrigues. However, for his two daughters, Ôigimi and Naka no Kimi, who have no choice but to follow their father’s choice of mountain seclusion, the same sound must accentuate their sense of loneliness and helplessness in the middle of nowhere. Standing alone in a “sadder” mountain village than he had imagined, Kaoru wonders how this terrible sense of isolation has affected Ôigimi and Naka no Kimi, who have to spend restless nights hearing the sound of the “wind’s dreary moan” while completely cut off from the social hub of the city that noblewomen should join. Accordingly, despite the conformity of the passages from the two different *monogatari*, which both narrate the heroes’ imaginings and curiosity about aristocratic mountain seclusion, the *Genji* narrative gives a more detailed description, in which Kaoru burns with curiosity to know more about how Hachi no Miya’s two daughters spend their days within their father’s home in a lonely mountain village.

The above poem by Shokushi may also echo another passage in the chapter “Shiigamoto” (Beneath the Oak), the next sequence of “Hashihime,” which centers on Hachi no Miya’s death and its devastating consequences for his daughters. The following lines from “Shiigamoto” narrate how Ôigimi and Naka no Kimi hear a freezing wind blowing fiercely through their mountain residence, where they have been left alone: “In the season of snow and hail, the sound of the wind, which blows just as mournfully everywhere, made them feel nonetheless as though they had only just withdrawn from the

world into these hills”⁵³ [雪あられふりしく頃は、いづくもかくこそはある風の音なれど、今はじめて思ひ入りたらむ山住みのここちしたまふ⁵⁴]. This passage not only shares specific words with Shokushi’s poem (*arare* or “hail” and *kaze* or “wind”), but also its mood; in particular, how “the sound of the wind” mingled with “hail” intensifies a woman’s sense of solitude and helplessness in close confinement in the depths of winter. In summary, we can conclude that Shokushi collects words, images, and feelings from specific narratives in the Uji chapters in order to portray the harsh living conditions of mountain seclusion, especially for women of noble birth, such as Hachi no Miya’s two daughters, who have limited freedom of choice as imperial princesses. In so doing, Shokushi represents a mountain residence as a place of anguish and helplessness for a woman who is obligated through social convention to live in close confinement, showing a striking contrast to a man’s self-imposed seclusion in his mountain residence as a place of a spiritual growth.

⁵³ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*. vol 2, p. 861.

⁵⁴ Tamagami, ed. *Genji Monogatari*. Vol. 10, p. 261.

The poetic representation of imperial princess as a floating boat

The indirectness of Shokushi's allusions to the *Genji monogatari* has often provoked controversy, leading scholars to provide different interpretations of and various allusive sources for her poems. Below is one of Shokushi's poems from Sequence B, whose obscure description of its subject matter has led many scholars to arrive at different interpretations of the poem:

川舟のうきて過行波の上にあづまのことぞ知られ馴れぬる

<i>Kawabune no</i>	Setting adrift on a riverboat
<i>ukite sugiyuku</i>	through the waves of life,
<i>nami no ue ni</i>	I have gradually accustomed
<i>azuma no koto zo</i>	myself to understanding
<i>shirare narenuru</i>	the situation in the East

Many scholars argue that in this poem, Shokushi uses the phrase of “the situation in the East,” in order to represent her lamentation over the ongoing intrigues over political power in the Eastern part of Japan, especially over the death of her brother, Prince Mochihito, who was killed after he raised a rebellion against the military Taira clan.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Oda Takeshi opposes the interpretation of Shokushi's poem as her reflections upon the political situation “in the East.” He demonstrates that Shokushi is actually alluding to lines in the “Yadorigi” (The Ivy) chapter from the Uji chapters, where Ukifune, the unrecognized third daughter of Hachi no Miya, first appears in the story as the last heroine of the *Genji monogatari*.⁵⁶ In the following passage, Kaoru, who is still in despair over the death of Ôigimi, sets off to Uji to build a temple in the late Hachi no Miya's residence. Here, he catches a glimpse of Ukifune, who stops by Uji on the way back to the East from a pilgrimage to the temple at Hatsuse:

⁵⁵ See this argument in *Heian Kamakura Shika Shû*. NKBT 80, p. 388. Also in Takenishi, *Shikishi Naishinnô*, p. 44 and in Baba, *Shikishi Naishinnô*, p. 70.

⁵⁶ Oda, *Shokushi*, p. 263.

[From Hachi no Miya's residence, Kaoru] spied a quite modest woman's carriage just now crossing the bridge, securely accompanied by a band of rough warriors from the East...[Kaoru found out that] it was the young woman [Ukifune] whom he had heard [of]...[After Ukifune stepped down from the carriage, she]...worried about the direction from which [Kaoru] was looking, she lay down facing the other way. "What a time you had, my lady! The ferry across the Izumi River was just terrifying today!" "It was a lot easier in the second month, when the river was lower. Talk about travel, though, what is there anywhere here to be frightened about, compared to the East?" The two women sat chatting with no sign of fatigue while their mistress lay there in silence. Her extended arm was too plump and pretty to belong to any daughter of a Hitachi Governor [Ukifune's stepfather].⁵⁷

女車のことごとしきさまにはあらぬ一つ、あらましき東男の、腰に物負へるあまた具して、下人も数多くたのもしげなるけしきにて、橋より今、わたり来る見ゆ[中略]おいや、聞きし人ななり、とおぼし出でて[中略]こなたをばうしろめたげに思ひて、あなたさまに向きてぞ、添い臥しぬる、さも苦しげに思したりつるかな、泉川の船わたりも、まことに今日はいと恐しくこそありつれ、この二月には、水のすくなかりしかばよかりしなりけり、いでや、ありくは、東路思へば、いづこか恐ろしからむ、など二人して、苦しとも思ひたらず言ひ居たるに、主は音もせでひれ臥したり、腕をさし出でたるが、

⁵⁷ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*, Vol. 2, pp. 968-9.

まろやかにをかしげなる程も、ひたち殿などいふべくは見えず、まことにあ
てなり、⁵⁸

Upon stealing a peek at Ukifune, the half-sister of his most beloved woman, Kaoru is elated at her resemblance to Ôigimi. Kaoru later decides to take Ukifune away from her mother, the only person Ukifune can rely on, and hide her in a secluded place in Uji Mountain, an act that would ensure that Ukifune had no one else to rely on but him. Oda Takeshi explains that, when Shokushi refers to “riverboat”, she is, in fact, alluding to Ukifune, whose name means “floating boat,” and therefore “the waves” signifies Ukifune’s uncertain life, which is symbolized by the “terrifying” travel she has just taken by “ferry across the Izumi River.”⁵⁹ He demonstrates that the phrase “the situation in the East” does not indicate the reality of political struggles in Eastern Japan, but alludes to the above passage in which Ukifune hears “the two women” comparing their travel experiences in the West with “the situation in the East.”⁶⁰ Ukifune’s “terrifying” travel, in fact, foreshadows her distressing love relationships, which comprise the main storyline of the rest of the chapters, in which Ukifune suffers from coercive relationships with both Kaoru and his rival in love, Prince Niou. Toward the end of the *Genji monogatari*, Ukifune’s inability to choose between them gives her no choice but to attempt suicide. In Shokushi’s reference to “the situation in the East” in the above poem, it is hard to believe that Shokushi is making comments about the tragic death of her brother, since she never refers to the political situation of her day in any of her other extant poems. Therefore, it is natural to assume, as Oda suggests, that Shokushi refers to the above passage in order to illustrate Ukifune’s ominous beginnings on the journey to her new life in the “West” as

⁵⁸ Tamagami, ed. *Genji Monogatari*. Vol. 10, pp. 294-5.

⁵⁹ Oda, *Shokushi*, p. 264.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 264.

a “floating boat” that never knows how to navigate, and is thus “adrift” on the uncertain waters of life.

Princess Shokushi often represents one’s feelings of uncertainty about life, through her frequent allusions to “a floating boat” at the mercy of its environment, which reminds us of the social situations of many female characters in *The Tale of Genji*, such as Ôigimi and Ukifune. The following is one of Shokushi’s poems on love from Sequence C that evokes the feelings of uncertainty of these female characters, who feel set adrift like a boat left to navigate unknown waters on their own:

しるべせよ跡なき波にこぐ船の行ゑもしらぬ八重のしほ風

*shirube seyo
atonaki nami ni
kogu fune no
yukue mo shiranu
yahe no shiokaze*

O passing breeze across
the unbounded ocean! Help me
navigate through the traceless
waves as I paddle this boat,
not knowing where to go

Below is Fujiwara Kachion’s poem on love from *Kokinwakashû*, known as the *honka* of this poem:⁶¹

*Shiranami no
ato naki kata ni
yuku fune mo
kaze zo tayori no
shirube narikeru*

When a boat journeys
on a course where no white wave
sets it on its way
ah, the boat at least finds help
from the friendly wind, but I...⁶²

In her poem, Shokushi relies on “passing breeze” to guide her “boat” or her love for some man, because both are at a loss, “not knowing where to go” and drifting over quiet waters alone. Shokushi’s addition to the poetic output of its *honka*, “yukue mo shiranu” or “not knowing where to go,” is used here to emphasize the undefined but constant anxiety

⁶¹ *Heian Kamakura Shika Shû*. NKBT 80, p. 400.

⁶² *Kokin Wakashû. The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry: With Tosa Nikki and Shinsen Waka*. Translated and Annotated by Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press., 1985), p. 111.

about whether or not her “boat” will be approaching its destination, where she can alleviate her feelings of anxiety and gain some peace in her life. Scholar and poet Baba Akiko takes special interest in Shokushi’s frequent use of this phrase, “yukue mo shiranu,” in her poems and suggests that Shokushi uses it to represent her own feelings of helplessness in her life as an imperial princess.⁶³ Takenishi Hiroko also demonstrates that the frequent appearance of this phrase in her poems shows Shokushi’s strong attachment to the resonance this phrase holds for her.⁶⁴ In this way, many scholars are agreed that the phrase “yukue mo shiranu” is an example of Shokushi’s distinctive voice, through which she finds a way to express her own feelings of uncertainty about her life. Oda Takeshi, however, proposes a different approach to this argument, saying that Shokushi simply borrows the phrase from a poem in *Kokinwakashū*.⁶⁵ In any case, the recurrence of Shokushi’s use of this phrase,⁶⁶ through which she represents her “undefined but constant” anxiety about life full of uncertainties, makes it difficult for her readers to believe that she is simply borrowing it from *Kokinwakashū*, without recognizing its emotive connotations. Toward the end of the *Genji monogatari*, for example, there appears a scene in which Ukifune composes a poem that includes the phrase “yukue shirarenu,” in conformity with Shokushi’s usage of the similar phrase, through which both poetesses represent a woman’s lack of control over the direction of her own life. The following is the poem by Ukifune from the chapter “Ukifune” (Drifting

⁶³ Baba, *Shikishi Naishinnō*, p. 86.

⁶⁴ Takenishi, *Shikushi Naishinnō*, p. 29.

⁶⁵ Oda, *Shokushi*, pp. 263-4. Shokushi may be borrowing this phrase from a poem by Mitsune from *Kokin Wakashū*. trans. McCullough, p. 137:

waga koi wa	I cannot be sure
yukue mo shirazu	where this love of mine may lead,
hate mo nashi	or how it may end
au o kagiri to	I know only that meeting
omou bakari zo	is my final objective

⁶⁶ There are five extant poems by Shokushi, which all include the same phrase, “yukue mo shiranu”.

Boat), in which she identifies her fate with a “drifting boat,” referring to her unstable social status as an unrecognized imperial princess who has no prospects of obtaining social security as a wife of the two noblemen who pursue her—Kaoru and Prince Niou, who both want her simply as a mistress:

<i>tachibana no</i>	Though the color of the isle
<i>kojima no iro wa</i>	of orange trees may stay the same,
<i>kawaraji o</i>	this boat—unable to abide here—
<i>kono ukifune zo</i>	must drift through uncertain waters,
<i>yukue shirarenu</i>	not knowing where to go

This poem appears in the scene in which Prince Niou, who, after forcibly having sexual relations with Ukifune, becomes obsessive about winning her away from Kaoru and temporarily removes her from the place at Uji in which Kaoru has secluded her from the outside world. As they cross a river in a small boat heading toward a hideaway, Ukifune composes the above poem in complete bewilderment, waffling between her feelings of attraction to Prince Niou and her confusion over his egocentric behavior, which causes her betrayal of Kaoru and Naka no Kimi, her half-sister who becomes Prince Niou’s wife. Prince Niou, however, never understands Ukifune’s confusion over the situation. He is simply pleased to see the bewilderment on her face as she composes the poem: “Such was the moment and so lovely the woman that her poem, too, struck him as a delight.”⁶⁷ Nonetheless, when she sees how unaware Prince Niou is of her feelings, Ukifune begins to feel even more uncertain about her fate in this situation. Similarly, Kaoru has not planned to make her his wife, but only to keep her as a substitute for Ôigimi, because, despite her noble birth, her social status as the unrecognized daughter of Hachi no Miya, who refused to acknowledge her as his own, makes her ineligible to be a nobleman’s wife. The phrase “yukue shirarenu” (not knowing where to go) in Ukifune’s poem, therefore,

⁶⁷ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*, vol 2, p. 1026.

epitomizes Ukifune's sense of insecurity and uncertainty about her life as an abandoned princess destined to suffer from the constant emotional and social instabilities caused by the male authorities in her life, who are inconsiderate of her state. Beginning with the obvious use of Shokushi's *honka-dori*, she builds her poem above upon the poem by Fujiwara Kachion in which he represents the feelings of confusion and helplessness that often accompany a man's strong passion for someone. However, through her addition of the phrase "yukue mo shiranu," Shokushi transforms the male's feeling of sentimentality into a female's sense of insecurity about the lack of control over her own life. The above poem by Shokushi is an example of the many suggested references to female characters from *The Tale of Genji* in her poems, such as Ôigimi and Ukifune, while her *direct* allusions to these women are extremely rare. Furthermore, as we have already seen in Shokushi's direct allusion to Kachion's poem from *Kokinwakashû*, along with the particular poetic expression that recalls Ukifune, Shokushi's indirect allusions to these female characters in her poems are almost always hidden behind direct references to a male poet's main narrative.

The tale of abandoned imperial princesses

The repeated motif of the theme of the insecurity and anguish of women of noble birth under male authority can be seen in Shokushi's poems that refer to both the Uji and earlier chapters of the *Genji*. Shokushi's poems in the context of the earlier chapters often reveal how she deliberately selects the scenes in which one of Genji's consorts, named Lady Murasaki, suffers not only from Genji's series of love affairs with different women, but also from his lack of consideration for her feelings. The following is one of these examples, Shokushi's poem from Sequence B that indirectly alludes to Lady Murasaki:

とけてねぬ夜半の枕をゝのづから氷に結ぶをしことゝふ

tokete nenu
yoha no makura wo
onozukara
kôri ni musubu
oshi kototofu

In the middle of night, I hear
a mandarin duck, who, trapped
inside icy water, cries of its own accord
at my pillowside as I lie here,
sleepless, with this uneasy chill

On a superficial level, this poem repeats one of her typical poetic expressions, as we have seen in some of the poems discussed earlier, which is a woman's sense of vulnerability while confined and exposed to the severity of a cold winter. The underlying emotion of this poem is summed up in two words in the first line—"tokete" [to melt] and "nenu" [unable to sleep]—that depict the speaker's feeling of helpless desperation over spending a sleepless winter night, caused by the icy desolation that makes it impossible for her to "melt" the frost in her heart and body. The word "*oshi*" or "mandarin duck" plays a crucial role in further intensifying this feeling of loneliness. Since "*oshi*" is a water bird known to mate for life, it can be seen as a metaphor for conjugal happiness; however, in the Japanese *waka* traditions, the same word often evokes the image of a solitary bird

without its mate, thereby representing the speaker's sense of grief over the complete solitude one feels without one's most beloved.⁶⁸ The deep feeling of solitude reflected in this poem becomes even clearer as we analyze its *honzetsu*, a passage that appears in the chapter "Asagao" (The Bluebell). This scene begins with Genji talking to Lady Murasaki about his relationships with different women and ends with a poem Genji composes after waking from a dream in which he sees a vision of Fujitsubo, his deceased stepmother, with whom he had an illicit affair:

Genji talked on into the night [about his relationships with different women], about the present and the past. The moon shone more and more brightly through the marvelous stillness. [Murasaki] said,
*"Frozen into ice, water caught among the rocks can no longer flow,
and it is the brilliant moon that soars freely through the sky."*

Leaning toward a little that way to look out, she was lovelier than any woman in the world. The sweep of her hair, her face, suddenly brought back to him most wonderfully the figure of the lady he had loved [Fujitsubo], and his heart, which had been somewhat divided, turned again to her alone. A mandarin duck cried, and he said,
*"Amid all this snow that brings back fond memories of times now gone by,
ah, what fresh melancholy in a mandarin duck's cry!"*

When he went in again [and] lay down, his mind still on [Fujitsubo..., not knowing whether it was a dream or not, he saw a vision of Fujitsubo...]. [Genji] found that he had been weeping and moistened his sleeves all over

⁶⁸ Katagiri, *Utamakura Utakotoba Jiten*, p. 476.

again. Lying stock-still, with [Murasaki] beside him wondering what had come over him, he murmured,

*“Ah, how brief it was, the vision that came to me while, bereft of sleep, on a lonely winter’s night I was caught up in a dream!”*⁶⁹

昔今の御物語に夜更けゆく。月いよへへ澄みて、静かに面白し、女君、

こほりとち石間の水はゆきなやみ空すむ月のかげぞながるゝ

外を見出して、すこし傾きたまへる程、似る物なくうつくしげなり、かんざしおもやうの、恋ひきこゆる人の、おもかげに、ふとおぼえて、めでたければ、いささか分くる御心もとりかさねつべし、鴛鴦のうち鳴きたるに、

かきつめてむかし恋しき雪もよにあはれをそふるをしのうきねか

入りたまひても、宮の御事を思ひつゝ大殿籠もれるに、夢ともなくほのかに見たてまつるを、[中略] 涙も流れ出でにけり、今もいみじく濡らし添へたまふ、女君、いかなる事にかと思すに、うちもみじろがで臥したまへり、

とけて寝ぬねざめ寂しき冬の夜に結ばほれつる夢のみじかさ⁷⁰

Oda Takeshi shows how Shokushi takes various words from this *honzetsu*—the upper verses of Shokushi’s poem are taken from Genji’s last poem (including the phrase “*tokete nenu*” or unable to sleep with ease) and the lower verses randomly from the other parts of the passage (such as the word “*oshi*” or “a mandarin duck” and the expression “*kôri toji*” or “frozen into ice”). Oda then explains how Shokushi represents Genji’s feeling of isolation in her poem by depicting a winter night in which “*oshi*” or “a mandarin duck” visits Genji, in order to “cry” and lament together with him over the absence of his most beloved woman, Fujitsubo. By focusing too much on Genji’s point of view, Oda seems

⁶⁹ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*, Vol. 1, pp. 374-5.

⁷⁰ Tamagami, ed. *Genji Monogatari*, Vol. 7, pp. 301-5.

to fail to analyze the significance of this *honzetsu* from Lady Murasaki's perspective. In her poem, Lady Murasaki indirectly manifests the inequality of the relationship between Genji and Murasaki: while she is kept in close confinement at one of Genji's palaces, like "frozen water caught among the rocks," Genji enjoys the privilege of being able to leave the same palace anytime he likes, just like "the brilliant moon that soars freely," in order to stay with different women. Upon hearing Murasaki's poem, Genji never tries to understand the hidden meanings in her poem, but only focuses on Murasaki's "lovely" appearance, which resembles that of her aunt, Fujitsubo, Genji's unforgettable lover. The two poems Genji composes in this scene demonstrate how he treats Murasaki as merely an "object" to supplement his unfulfilled desire for Fujitsubo, because both poems are written for Fujitsubo in his mind, despite the presence of Murasaki beside him. This shows that, in truth, Genji is paying no heed to Murasaki's inner feelings. By combining the phrase "frozen into ice" from Murasaki's poem and the word "*oshi*" from its *honzetsu*, Shokushi creates the new image of "a mandarin duck frozen into ice" (*kôri ni musubu oshi*) in her own poem, which refers to Lady Murasaki's lamentation over her life in close confinement with her "icy mate," who refuses to build spiritual bonds with her. In this way, obscuring the subject matter of her poem in the broad context of the *Genji monogatari* allows her to make critical statements about the mental anguish of the female characters, while not being too overly critical of the heroes' indifference to these women's feelings.

The fact that Princess Shokushi often refers to Lady Murasaki—one of the most important heroines among Genji's wives and consorts in the earlier chapters—illustrates Shokushi's special interest in this character. The daughter of an imperial prince, Lady

Murasaki first appears in the tale as an abandoned princess, just like Ôigimi and Ukifune, because her mother has already passed away and her father lives with his primary wife and her children, thereby leaving Murasaki with no choice but to live with her grandmother in a secluded mountain village. At the age of eight, she is discovered by Genji, who, when her grandmother passes away, moves her from her grandmother's mountain residence to his palace. Although Genji initially considers Murasaki a mere substitute for Fujitsubo, she gradually becomes a woman whose rare beauty and noble grace has no comparison among any of his other consorts and wives. Up to the time of Lady Murasaki's death, because Genji considers her one of his most fortunate consorts, because she has stayed with him longest and gained his amorous attentions most, he never understands the hidden emptiness of her heart. The following is another poem from Sequence B, in which Shokushi alludes to Lady Murasaki's sense of uncertainty about her fate:

さゝがにのいとゞ かゝれる夕露のいつまでとのみ思ふものから

*sasagani no
itodo kakareru
yûtsuyu no
itsu made to nomi
omou mono kara*⁷¹

My life is at the very tip
of its ending, just like an evening
dew that barely hangs on to a spider's
thread—ah, how much longer
will it last without slipping away?

Known to have been in delicate health her entire life, this poem shows Shokushi's sorrowful consciousness of her numbered days in middle age. On one hand, the "spider's thread" represents the fragility of her life, throwing into relief her own uncertainty of the time when it will be cut off. On the other hand, she conveys her eagerness for life in the words "omou mono kara," meaning that she wishes to live as long as possible even

⁷¹ Here I used the phrase "omou mono kara" from Oda Takeshi's text (p. 271). Another variant is introduced in other Japanese sources, which explain the same phrase as "omou mono kawa."

though she knows it will not be very long.⁷² In order to understand the depth of the meanings in this poem, however, we must turn our attentions to the following poem by Lady Murasaki, which Oda Takeshi claims as the *honka* of Shokushi's above poem:

<i>kaze fukaba</i>	O how tenuous!
<i>mazu zo midaruru</i>	a spider's thread that hangs on to a dewdrop
<i>iro kawaru</i>	at the very tip of that fading leaf—
<i>asaji ga tsuyu ni</i>	if the wind blows,
<i>kakaru sasagani</i>	surely you are the first to tremble

While suppressing her strong emotions about Genji's constant interest in and desire for other women, Lady Murasaki indirectly expresses her despair and distrust of him in this poem: "I ['*sasagani*,' or 'a spider's thread'] who have only you, with all your shifting moods and loves ['*iro kawaru asaji ga*,' or 'that fading leaf'], cannot feel secure."⁷³ As Genji looks at this poem, however, he neglects to read between the lines: "Her writing is prettier all the time, [he thinks] to himself, smiling with pleasure at how lovely she [is]."⁷⁴ It is noteworthy how, although composed at different time periods, Shokushi's poetry frequently refers to the various scenes and poems in *The Tale of Genji* that share a common narrative theme, that is, how the heroes' ignorance of and indifference to women's feelings cause these women's sufferings to increase. These female characters also share a striking commonality—they all appear in the tale as abandoned imperial princesses, whose lack of strong family support leaves them in close confinement and defenseless against noblemen's selfish pursuance of them. Through the message of her eagerness for life in her above poem, however, Shokushi not only throws light on these female characters' enduring desires to be heard, but also explores her own will to defy a image of an imperial princess as a submissive and passive observer of her own life.

⁷² Oda, *Shokushi*, p. 271.

⁷³ Tyler, trans. *The Tale of Genji*, vol 1, p. 206.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 206.

Conclusion

As a poet, Princess Shokushi maintained a lifelong enthusiasm for contemplating the “gloomy” side of life in her poems through her representation of feelings of loneliness and isolation in places of seclusion. Through her direct allusions to the popular male characters that control the narratives of the *Genji monogatari* in her poems, Shokushi encourages her readers to seek out the alternative narratives of the female characters and their inner sufferings—sufferings that are unknown to the heroes with which they are associated. In steering the reader’s attention toward specific scenes in which the female characters who, despite their experiences as abandoned princesses, struggle to defend their honor as women of noble birth, Shokushi places a high value on these women’s sense of integrity and female dignity. Despite her life as an imperial princess and one of the most renowned poets of her day, little of Shokushi’s life is actually known to us, because, as a woman, her existence was not as worthy an historical record as that of a man. Nevertheless, her words have continuously transcended the boundaries of time and space, providing us invaluable clues to her thoughts in poetry that highlight the woman’s side of historical narratives through her allusions to *The Tale of Genji*. Shokushi must have been well aware that an alternative history of a woman’s internal life, especially her feelings of misery and sorrow over her social conditions, could be recorded only indirectly through the fictional reality of literature.

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