

English Review of 筒井美智子著『源氏物語：四代にわたる物語の意図』

Evaluation 2 Paper for ASIAN 573, 2023 Spring

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Motivation

I found that papers in the intersection between Statistics and 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji are mostly in the same pattern of clustering, so I would prefer not to do another one in this area. The movie 『千年の恋ひかる 源氏物語』 *Sennen no koi: Hikaru Genji Monogatari* [4] we watched on Monday of week 9 gives a summary of the plot around 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji, both of the fictional world (from the born to the death of 光源氏 *Hikaru Genji*) and the real world in the Heian court (around the relationships of 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*, 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga*, and 藤原彰子 *Fujiwara Shōshi*). I found this paper [1] to be an extended reading of the connection between the history and the tale discussed in the movie, which interests me viewed the movie less than one week ago.

Summary of Contents

There are discussions about whether 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji is written solely by 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*, or is written by multiple authors, as the future generations have created many 続編 sequels and 異本 side stories other than 紫式部の書いた原形 the original story, 整理 summarized, 校訂 revised, and 権威づける authorized by 藤原定家 *Fujiwara Teika*. Although Michiko agrees that the sole reliance on 定家本 the edition by *Fujiwara Teika* for 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*'s personality is dangerous, Michiko thinks 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* plays an irreplaceable role in the plot and the values. This paper [1] elaborates on this topic and makes arguments by comparing six different versions of four generations in and out of the tale:

Line	Name	First Person	Second Person	Third Person	Fourth Person
1	Emperors in 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji	桐壺帝 <i>Kiritsubo tei</i>	朱雀帝 <i>Suzaku tei</i>	冷泉帝 <i>Reizei tei</i>	今上帝 <i>Kinjō tei</i>
2	Central figures in 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji	桐壺帝 <i>Kiritsubo tei</i>	光源氏 <i>Hikaru Genji</i> / 頭中将 <i>Tō no chūjō</i>	夕霧 <i>Yūgiri</i> / 明石中宮 <i>Akashi no chūgū</i> / 柏木 <i>Kashiwagi</i>	匂宮 <i>Niō no miya</i> / 薫 <i>Kaoru</i>
3	Blood of 明石 Akashi's family in 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji	明石入道 <i>Akashi no Nyūdō</i>	明石の君 <i>Akashi no kimi</i>	明石中宮 <i>Akashi no chūgū</i>	匂宮 <i>Niō no miya</i>
4	Central figures in 『宇津保物語』 <i>Utsuho Monogatari</i>	清原俊蔭 <i>Kiyohara Toshikage</i>	俊蔭の娘 Daughter of <i>Toshikage</i>	藤原仲忠 <i>Fujiwara Nakatada</i>	犬宮 <i>Inu no gū</i>

Line	Name	First Person	Second Person	Third Person	Fourth Person
5	父方 Father' s genealogy out of tale	藤原兼輔 <i>Fujiwara no Kanesuke</i> (堤 中納言 <i>Tsutsumi chūnagon</i>)	藤原雅正 <i>Fujiwara no Masatada</i>	藤原為時 <i>Fujiwara no Tametoki</i>	紫式部 <i>Murasaki Shikibu</i>
6	母方 Mother' s genealogy out of tale	藤原文範 <i>Fujiwara no Fuminori</i>	藤原為信 <i>Fujiwara no Tamenobu</i>	為信の女 Daughter of <i>Tamenobu</i>	紫式部 <i>Murasaki Shikibu</i>

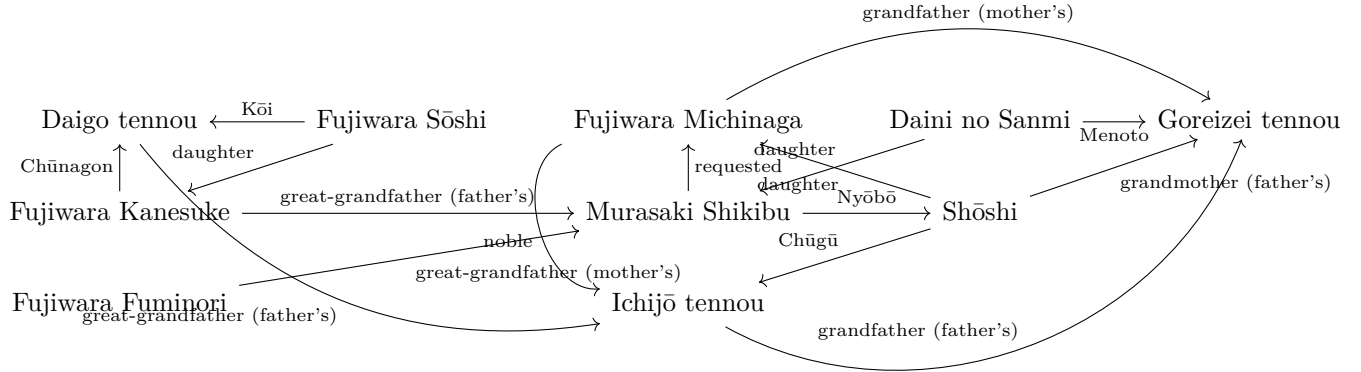
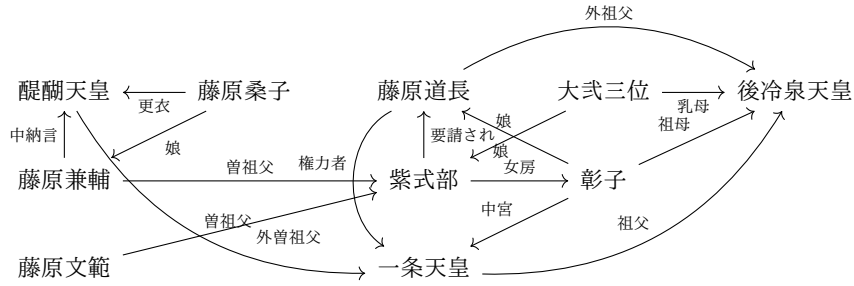
The central figures in 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji are based on the figures in 『宇津保物語』 *Utsuho Monogatari* as line (4), a prior story passing 琴 *koto* over generations, while 源正頼 *Minamoto Masayori* owning a great house split by 四季 four seasons. In 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji, the pride and wealth of Genji pass through 明石 Akashi' s blood as line (3), and the house becomes 六条院 *Rokujō in*. The father 明石入道 *Akashi no Nyūdō* of 明石の君 *Akashi no kimi* is a relative of 桐壺中宮 *Kiritsubo no chūgū*, the mother of 源氏 *Genji*, and he has moved to a lower position to come to 明石 *Akashi*. 源氏 *Genji* was a failure of marrying a woman to give birth to an emperor, so the plan by 入道 *Nyūdō* is to marry a daughter to a noble, and then marry the grand-daughter to the emperor such that the parents of the next potential emperor would not have a taint in his background like 源氏 *Genji*.

For 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* in line (5), her great-grandfather 藤原兼輔 *Fujiwara Kanesuke* was 中納言 *Chūnagon* and even sent his daughter 藤原桑子 *Fujiwara Sōshi* to the emperor, the highest position her family has been in, and he has created 55 waka poetries in the most famous collections. The royally picked poetries of 藤原兼輔 *Fujiwara Kanesuke* in 古今集 *Kokinshū*, 後撰集 *Gosenshū*, and 兼輔集 *Kanesukeshū* are heavily referenced (by a rhetorical device called 引歌 *Hikiuta*) in the Tale of Genji. The Tale of Genji begins with “いづれの御時にか” [2] in Japanese or “At the Court of an Emperor (he lived it no matters not when)” [3] in English, at here could be interpreted as the reign of 醍醐天皇 *Daigo tennou* (as 桐壺帝 *Kiritsubo tei*) when 藤原兼輔 *Fujiwara Kanesuke* was born (signaling the top and the root of the pride of the family of 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*). It is similar to the line (5), while 藤原文範 *Fujiwara no Fuminori* is the top of the pride of the mother' s branch as a landlord. For the reproduction of the pride and the identity of 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*' s family until the generation of herself, there are exactly four generations needed to be in the plot, as compared with line (2).

The Tale of Genji ambitiously predicts the change after 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga* —the descending power of 藤原氏 *Fujiwara*' s maternal family and the ascending power of 源氏 *Genji*' s maternal family (that the future reigns are controlled by 源氏 *Genji*' s future generations by 冷泉帝 *Reizei tei*) in line (1). This reflects the persistence of the pride of 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga*' s family would go over, and 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*' s family would regain the power as 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga* on today. The method by 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* is to use 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga* and her daughter 彰子 *Shōshi*, to start to inverse the power inequality over time.

Evaluation, Values and Limitations

In the paper [1], Michiko does offer a great perspective on 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji, by focusing on the introduction, connection, and rationale of four generations in and out of the tale. The paper does only give lines (5) and (6) to partially cover the relationships out of the tale, so I make the following diagram to reveal more faucets in relationships mentioned in this paper for review and further evaluation:



In the movie [4], 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* is ego to some extent, but she is not so ambitious in appearance that she even voluntarily quits the court, rejects the proposal by 藤原道長 *Fujiwara Michinaga*, and backs to her home in 越前 *Echizen* when 彰子 *Shōshi* successfully becomes 中宮 *Chūgū*. From another perspective, this does not wipe the ambition: as an educator and an author, she no longer has any power to make a change (i.e., influencing 彰子 *Shōshi*) after that, so this might be her only option at that time to maximize her pride.

From this paper [1], 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* seems to write 明石の君 *Akashi no kimi* as a shadow of herself in the tale, by comparing lines (3) and (5) and the diagram above. But the four generations including 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* seem not to be able to perfectly fit. If we use 明石 *Akashi*'s family as the base, then instead of (5), a correspondence to (3) could be 藤原兼輔 *Fujiwara Kanesuke* — 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* — 彰子 *Shōshi* — 後冷泉天皇 *Goreizei tennou* & 大式三位 *Daini no Sanmi*. Here, there is 後朱雀天皇 *Gosuzaku tennou* between the generations of 彰子 *Shōshi* and 後冷泉天皇 *Goreizei tennou*, and there is a gap of two generations between 藤原兼輔 *Fujiwara Kanesuke* and 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu*, so this seemingly four generations of fit is consisted of seven generations in total.

The accuracy of this prediction by 紫式部 *Murasaki Shikibu* is half-half, her daughter 大式三位 *Daini no Sanmi* is later in the harem of 後冷泉天皇 *Goreizei tennou*, but the position is too low as 更衣 *Kōi* to complete the ambition to inverse the status (i.e., give birth to a new emperor), while she is still a 乳母 *Menoto* to influence the emperor through milk and education, as we have read as the first secondary reading in week 9 [5]. There are also minor issues in the four-generation setting of other lines which I hope could be addressed by this paper or further research. For example, lines (1) and (2) do not include 先帝 *Sentei*. Also, the paper lacks discussion for the two generations in the middle of every line except for line (3).

For readers of this paper [1], the complex relations of people might be a barrier to understanding, but I think it could be alleviated by my diagram above, the diagrams widely available in the first few pages of most paper copies of 源氏物語 the Tale of Genji. Through this paper [1], I believe that people reading the tale could know more about the history around its creation by transferring the knowledge from what they have just read.

Explanations of Terms in Paper

Term	Explanation
本 <i>bon</i>	book, edition (e.g., 定家本 <i>Teika bon</i> means Teika' s edition)
琴 <i>koto</i>	an ancient Chinese musical instrument by five or seven strings
古今集 <i>Kokinshū</i>	full name be 古今和歌集 <i>Kokin wakashū</i> , the first imperial anthology of classical Japanese waka poetries
後撰集 <i>Gosenshū</i>	full name be 後撰和歌集 <i>Gosen wakashū</i> , the second imperial anthology of waka poetries after 古今集 <i>Kokinshū</i>
兼輔集 <i>Kanesukeshū</i>	the collection of waka poetries by 藤原兼輔 <i>Fujiwara Kanesuke</i> , built after 後撰集 <i>Gosenshū</i>
帝 <i>tei</i> / 天皇 <i>tennou</i> / ミカド・ 帝 <i>mikado</i>	emperor of Japan
先帝 <i>Sentei</i>	the previous emperor, i.e., the father of 桐壺帝 <i>Kiritsubo tei</i> in the tale
中納言 <i>Chūnagon</i>	close advisor to the emperor and handling the transmission of imperial orders and announcements, equivalent to lower third-rank official
女房 <i>Nyōbō</i>	female officials who serve in the imperial palace and are given a chamber to live in
中宮 <i>Chūgū</i>	中宮 <i>Chūgū</i> is the position of empress of Japan (usually one person, but there was a time when 藤原定子 <i>Fujiwara Teishi</i> called 皇后 <i>Kōgō</i> , and 藤原彰子 <i>Fujiwara Shōshi</i> called 中宮 <i>Chūgū</i> as 藤原道長 <i>Fujiwara Michinaga</i> forces 藤原彰子 <i>Fujiwara Shōshi</i> to be another empress)
女御 <i>Nyōgo</i>	女御 <i>Nyōgo</i> is a position in the emperor' s harem, lower than 中宮 <i>Chūgū</i> but higher than 更衣 <i>Kōi</i>
更衣 <i>Kōi</i>	originally the position for women who change clothes for the emperor, then becomes the position of a harem member lower than 女御 <i>Nyōgo</i>
乳母 <i>Menoto</i>	wet nurse, and for noble families, as well as the preliminary educator of children
越前 <i>Echizen</i>	an ancient province of Japan where is today' s northern part of 福井県 <i>Fukui</i> prefecture

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