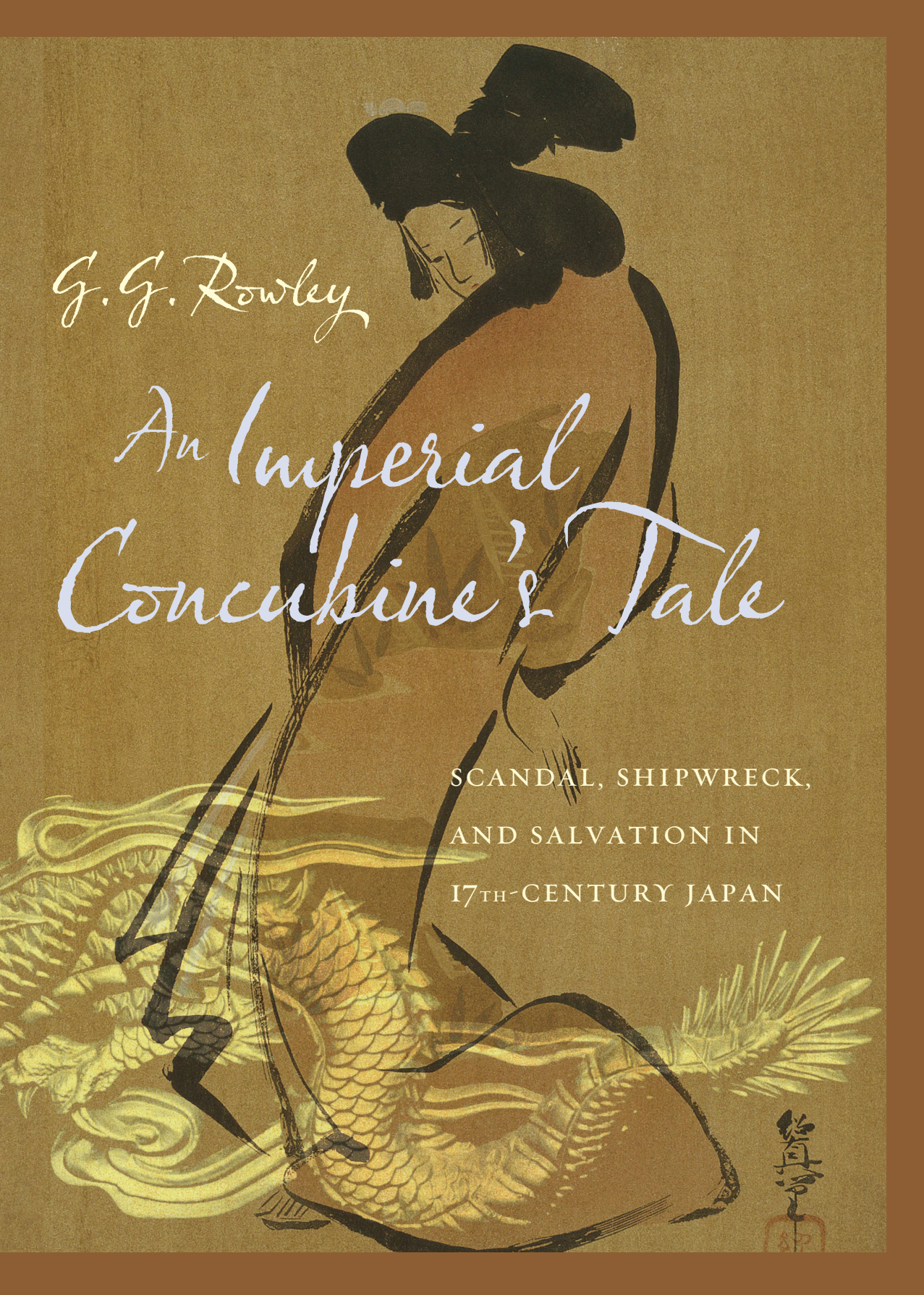


The background of the cover is a textured, olive-brown color. A stylized illustration in black ink and gold leaf is overlaid. It depicts a woman in a kimono, seen from the side, looking down. Her hair is in a traditional bun. Below her, there are swirling, flame-like or cloud-like patterns in gold leaf. In the bottom right corner, there is a small red square seal with black Japanese calligraphy.

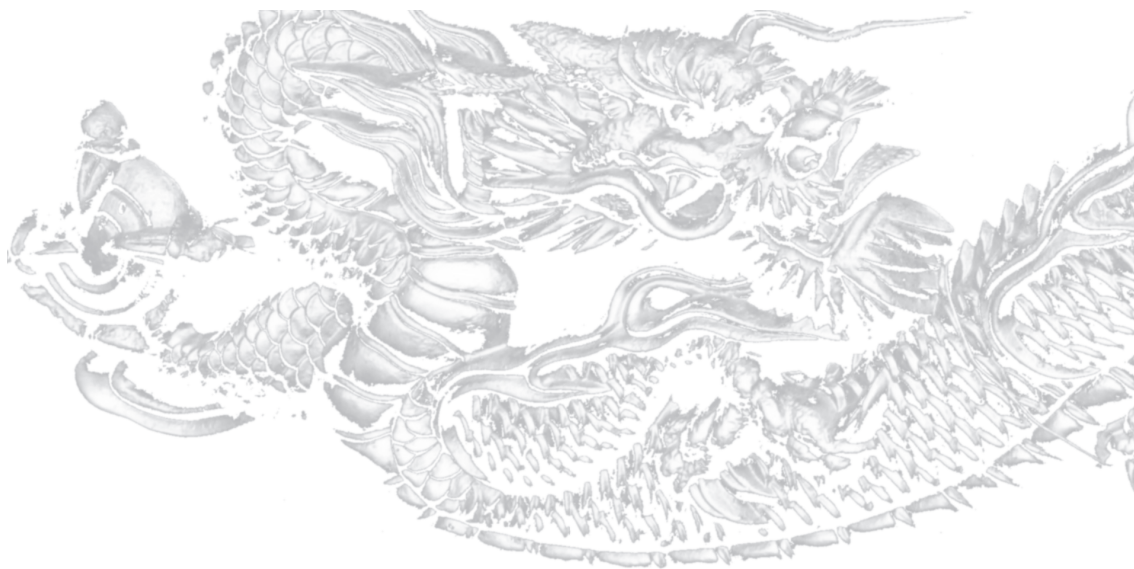
G. G. Rowley

An Imperial
Concubine's Tale

SCANDAL, SHIPWRECK,
AND SALVATION IN
17TH-CENTURY JAPAN

An Imperial Concubine's Tale

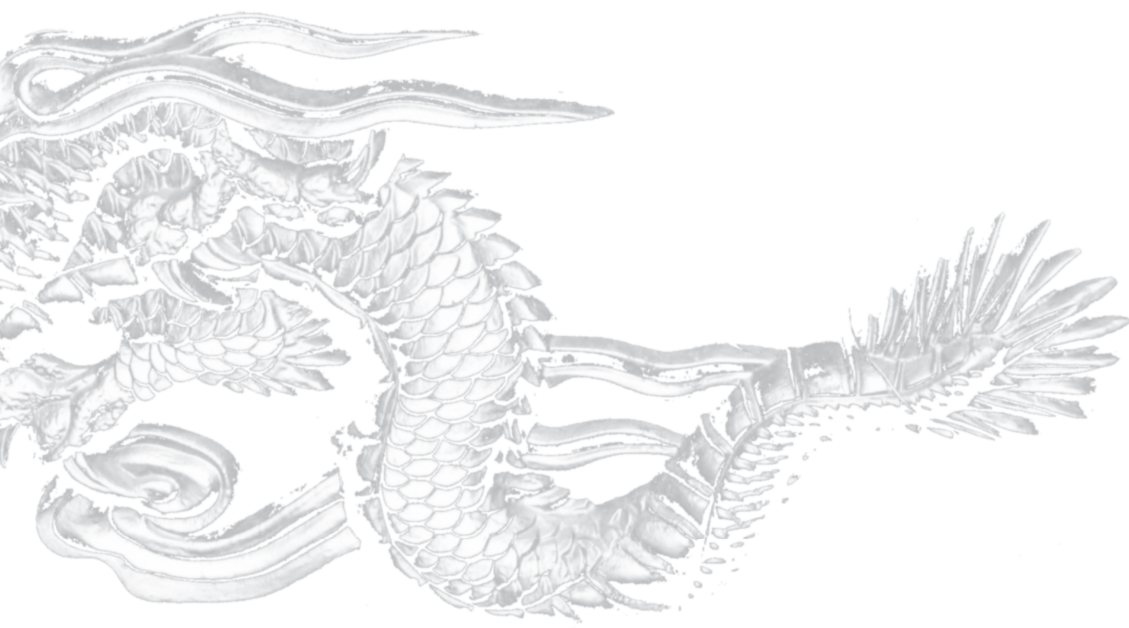
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G. G. Rowley

*An Imperial
Concubine's Tale*

SCANDAL, SHIPWRECK, AND SALVATION
IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY JAPAN





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For Thomas



"History, real solemn history, I cannot be interested in. Can you?"

"Yes, I am fond of history."

"I wish I were too. I read it a little as a duty, but it tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars or pestilences, in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all—it is very tiresome: and yet I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention. The speeches that are put into the heroes' mouths, their thoughts and designs—the chief of all this must be invention, and invention is what delights me in other books."

—JANE AUSTEN, *NORTHANGER ABBEY*

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The history of the final throes of the age of warfare in Japan—roughly 1573 to 1615—has traditionally been written as the history of men: the struggles of emperors and courtiers, military leaders and foot soldiers, European missionaries and shipwrecked sailors. The lives of the women who also endured this cataclysm have been recreated principally in the realm of popular entertainment: historical novels, television dramas, and movies.¹ Yet despite this plethora of reimaginings, until recently historians have paid little attention to women's half of Japan's experience during these years. To be sure, documentary evidence of the sort scholars rely upon to reconstruct past lives is, for most women in this period, fragmentary and imprecise. It makes much better professional sense to write about the men—there is so much more material to go on.² In this book I have tried to keep the focus on the women, but my account of the imperial concubine Nakanoin Nakako includes biographies of her father and brother as well. There is the intrinsic interest of their lives, of course, and the availability of source materials, principally poetry; father and brother are important too because men were such powerful figures in a woman's life. I have also chosen to include a brief biography of Akechi Tama, baptized Gracia, who was Nakako's aunt by adoption and

marriage: Nakako's mother was the adopted sister of Gracia's husband. The contrasting fates of these sisters-in-law illustrate how a woman's husband could mean the difference between life and death.

Throughout, I have attempted to steer a middle course between two kinds of historical writing: biography and imaginative re-creation. The lives of women such as Akechi Tama, Tokugawa Masako, and—for two examples from very different worlds—Bertrande de Rols, the wife of Martin Guerre, and Artemisia Gentileschi, the seventeenth-century Italian painter, have all been told both ways.³ Of course, the two genres have their advantages and disadvantages. "On the one hand there is truth; on the other there is personality," as Virginia Woolf put it when she summed up "the whole problem of biography."⁴ Kubo Takako's life of Tokugawa Masako, wife of Emperor GoMizuno'o, adheres strictly to what can be known from the documentary record and eschews literary sources altogether. As a result, the woman at the center of the story is lost, occluded from view by the welter of courtier diaries and shogunal directives concerning her. Miyao Tomiko's biography of the same subject takes instead the form of a historical novel narrated by an aged lady-in-waiting. Obviously unreliable as history, it nonetheless manages to conjure up an entire world; one closes the book convinced that the author has conveyed something of what it might have been like to live in it. Such has been my aim in this biography.

From time to time I have availed myself of the biographer's right to speculate, but—*pace* Catherine Morland's complaint in *Northanger Abbey*—I have not invented any speeches for my heroine's mouth. As a would-be writer of a woman's life in the seventeenth century, I have fashioned my story with such materials as have survived. Unfortunately, nothing indisputably by Nakako herself—not even a poem—has come down to us. This makes for difficulties, though they are not insurmountable. Natalie Zemon Davis crafted a portrait of the artist and naturalist Maria Sibylla Merian from her entomological texts and filled in the picture by attending to the people and places around her. Germaine Greer cleared away centuries of sexist speculation in her biography of Anne Hathaway, the wife of William Shakespeare; her subject left no texts of any sort, but scrupulous analysis of her husband's work and learned deployment of social history resulted in a much more plausible, satisfying account of the playwright's wife. Annette Gordon-Reed is another historian who has successfully created a convincing portrait of a woman who left no texts: Sally Hemings, Thomas Jefferson's concubine.⁵

The material I have worked with in the succeeding chapters straddles the worlds of fact and fiction: it includes oral history, poems, and a seventeenth-century novelette, as well as the more usual diaries, letters, and official histories. Poetry was once the written medium in which the elite of Japanese society were trained to express themselves; both Nakako's father and her brother wrote poems seemingly every day of their lives, and poems are (mostly) what survive of them. The novelette I include because it is full of period atmosphere and provides our only close-up—however contrived—of the characters at the heart of this story. Occasionally, I have also compared the history in which Nakako was embroiled with the fictional world depicted in *The Tale of Genji*. To almost everyone who mattered in Nakako's milieu, *Genji* was of immense importance: it described the golden age of the imperial court, which the reigning emperor sought to restore; it provided several aristocratic families, including Nakako's, with a house tradition of scholarship on which they depended for their livelihoods and for their place in the world; and it represented a standard of elegance to which the upper echelons of the warrior estate aspired. To put it another way, in seventeenth-century Japan, literate people understood themselves not simply in terms of the facts that are central to the protocols of modern history writing, but also through the correspondences they saw between their world and the world of *The Tale of Genji*. The novel had not yet been relegated irrevocably to the past; rather, it was part of the story they wanted to tell about themselves in the present, and as such it appears as a thread running through this narrative.



It is a pleasure at long last to be able to thank those many colleagues and friends who made writing this book so enjoyable and completing it possible. The initial spark was provided by Ii Haruki, Professor Emeritus of Osaka University, who many years ago sent my husband, Thomas Harper, an essay by Morikawa Akira in which the dramatic events of Nakanoin Nakako's life furnish essential background to a discussion of manuscripts in the hands of her father and brother. I am grateful to Professor Morikawa, Emeritus of Tokyo University by the time I contacted him, for kindly responding to my inquiries.

A fellowship from the Canon Foundation in Europe enabled me to begin full-time research in 2000. Willem Boot of Leiden University, Adriana

Boscaro of Ca'Foscari University of Venice, and Peter Kornicki of the University of Cambridge loyally supported me then, and have continued to offer their support whenever I asked for it. My thanks are also due to Corrie Siahaya-Van Nierop and her former colleagues at the Canon Foundation in Europe for their sponsorship of an unconventional project.

Yokoyama Toshio at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, gave generously of his time and matchless knowledge of the ancient capital. It is entirely thanks to introductions from him as well as his painstaking correction of my clumsy attempts at polite correspondence that I was able to gather much valuable material and meet many people who offered crucial insights. Among them were the current head of the Nakanoin house, Mr. Nakanoin Izumi, and his aunt Mrs. Ueda Hiroko, née Nakanoin, both of whom told me what they knew of their family's recent history. Ms. Furukawa Chika of the Kyoto University Library kindly helped me decipher the handwritten catalogue of the Nakanoin Archive and some of the documents it contains. Also in Kyoto, Professors Patricia Fister, Oka Yoshiko, and Barbara Ruch made time in their busy schedules to offer friendly advice and scholarly expertise. I am especially grateful to Patricia, who later read the entire manuscript and made many helpful suggestions for improvement. At the two convents with which Nakako was associated, Abbesses Tanida Gakushō, Shibata Shōrei, and Tanaka Ekō gladly shared their knowledge and their unique perspective. Many thanks also to Robert Singer and the Namikawa family for putting us up again.

In the village of Nijō in Izu, the current head of the Kutta-Suzuki house, Mrs. Suzuki Myō, and the four generations of her family welcomed us into their lives and graciously responded to my questions. I should especially like to thank her daughter Naomi and son-in-law Narushima Susumu for their warm hospitality on many occasions. I am also greatly indebted to our regular hosts, local historian Watanabe Morio and his wife, Sakae, of the Fukuya in Shimokamo, who went out of their way to help, providing photocopies of documents and maps, discussing possible scenarios, and driving us to important locations so that we could see the lay of the land for ourselves.

A conversation with Stanca Scholz-Cionca in 2000 convinced me that I could tell Nakako's story, and during a semester-long secondment to Venice International University in 2006, I began to see how to write it. In Venice, Peter and Rose Lauritzen kindly loaned us not only their guest flat but also their library, which turned out to be full of biographies of women.

The examples they offered of lives famous or notorious have been a constant source of inspiration.

Distracted by other projects and teaching duties for far too long, I finally returned to full-time work on this book in 2008–9, when Waseda University granted me a year's sabbatical leave. Thanks to Phillip Harries, I was able to spend that year at the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford, blissfully undisturbed. Linda Flores kindly arranged membership of the Pembroke College Senior Common Room, and Bjarke Frellesvig organized accommodations. I should also like to thank Robert Chard and Hilde De Weerd for their help with Chinese materials. James and Bonnie McMullen, and Brian and Irena Powell were as unstinting in their friendship that year as they have been for more than twenty years. Ian Neary of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies, University of Oxford, and Angus Lockyer of the Japan Research Centre at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, kindly invited me to present work-in-progress seminars, and I benefited greatly from the comments and questions of the audiences on these occasions. Later I also enjoyed the opportunity to speak about Nakako to the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Sydney; I am grateful to Rebecca Suter for the invitation, and her Sydney colleagues, past and present, for their warm hospitality during many visits over the years.

Friends have been a constant source of encouragement and insight. Since this project's inception, Royall and Susan Tyler have been congenial long-distance interlocutors. Edwin Cranston helped me make sense of the "bridge of dreams" poems on pp. 158–59. I am also grateful to Julia Borossa, Keiko Clarence-Smith, Kate Elwood, Susan Goldie, Bettina Gramlich-Oka, Kimura Akiko, Nicola Liscutin, Gail Marshall, Margaret Mehl, Motoyama Tetsuhito, Shudō Sachiko, and Geraldine Stone, whose interest never seemed to flag. The advice of Lesley Downer and Bill Hamilton was a boon. Rajyashree Pandey generously put her own work aside one summer to read the first draft; I went back to her many times for suggestions and could not have done without her sympathetic intelligence. Lee Butler and John Oliphant both made time to read the penultimate draft, and I am most grateful for their comments.

Professor Uesugi Kazuhiro of Kyoto Prefectural University designed the maps; I am indebted to his attention to detail and technical expertise. I also benefited from the assistance of Ueda Hiroshi, who created the family tree and helped me out in various other ways. The reader reports

for Columbia University Press were both meticulous and salutary, and this book owes much to their suggestions. Needless to say, the errors that remain are mine alone. I was fortunate again to be guided to publication by Jennifer Crewe, whose thoughtful assessments helped greatly to clarify my sense of the audience; and by Leslie Kriesel, whose good humor and many sensible suggestions were indispensable.

As ever, my greatest debt is to Thomas Harper, who first suggested the project to me, collected the basic materials, and kept at me for years until I finally agreed to look at them. Together we read many of the texts and visited the places Nakako once lived, from Maizuru on the Sea of Japan coast to Irōzaki overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Throughout, he has been my severest critic and my staunchest friend. This is his book too.

An Imperial Concubine's Tale



Japan in 1609

INTRODUCTION

Angry people are not always wise.

—JANE AUSTEN, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

apan in the early seventeenth century was a wild place. Serial killers stalked the streets of Kyoto after dark, cutting down people at random; while in the imperial palace, at parties hosted by the emperor's principal consort and held in the presence of his mother, noblemen and women mingled freely, pouring saké for one another and enjoying performances by an itinerant group of young women whose abandoned style of dancing would come to be known as kabuki. Among the noblewomen at these parties was an imperial concubine from the Nakanoin family; her personal name was Nakako. This book tells the story of her extraordinary life.

Nakako was born about 1591 to a middle-ranking nobleman, Nakanoin Michikatsu, and his wife, the daughter of an old provincial warrior family. At the time of Nakako's birth, the family lived in a remote castle facing the Sea of Japan where her father had taken refuge following a forbidden relationship with an imperial concubine. In 1599, after nineteen years in the countryside, he was finally pardoned and recalled to the capital. Shortly thereafter, in the first month of 1601, Nakako entered service in the imperial palace. There her duties included waiting upon Emperor GoYōzei, grandson of the emperor whose ire had caused her father to flee Kyoto. In

due course, she could expect to be favored with the emperor's intimate attentions.

In 1603, following a tumultuous battle between two competing coalitions of warlords, the leader of the victorious coalition, Tokugawa Ieyasu, was appointed shogun by the court. Two years later he retired, the better to oversee the transition to Tokugawa hegemony from behind the scenes, and the title of shogun passed to his son, Hidetada, who ruled from his castle in Edo, present-day Tokyo. Even so, the Tokugawa grip on the country was not yet secure. The shogunal deputy in Kyoto stepped up patrols of the city and began investigating the random killings. Meanwhile, princes and nobles continued to pay their respects at the great castle in Osaka, where the young Toyotomi Hideyori, son of the country's former military hegemon, and his mother clung to the vestiges of power. The courtiers were hedging their bets: they knew that the current truce was an uneasy one, and sooner or later, either the Tokugawa in Edo or the Toyotomi in Osaka must emerge preeminent.

In the midst of this period of uncertainty, scandal erupted. On the fourth day of the seventh month of 1609,* the thirty-eight-year-old Emperor GoYōzei was outraged to discover that a group of his courtiers and concubines had been meeting clandestinely to indulge in illicit sexual escapades. The women had consented to assignations with their male colleagues; they had gone to view open-air performances of kabuki dancing; they had all enjoyed drinking together at parties that are described as orgies of indiscriminate couplings. The emperor demanded that the guilty courtiers and concubines alike should be "executed, painfully, and before mine own eyes."¹ This incident is known variously as the court lady scandal (*kanjo jiken*); the Inokuma scandal (*Inokuma jiken*), after one of the noblemen involved; and the dragon-scale scandal (*gekirin jiken*). *Gekirin*, literally "contrariwise scales," refers to the rage of a dragon, and by extension a ruler. As a description of imperial anger, the expression has its origins in a passage in "On the Difficulties of Persuasion" by the third century B.C. Chinese philosopher Han Feizi:

Now this beast the Dragon can be tamed, and when trained can even be mounted. On the underside of its neck, however, it has sharp scales a foot

*Rather than specify traditional era designations, I have used the familiar Christian system for indicating years. Months and days are given in their original lunar form throughout.

broad that grow contrariwise to all the others. Anyone who touches them is certain to be killed. The rulers of men too have their *gekirin*, their sharp contrariwise scales.²

True to Han Feizi's warning, two of those who had rubbed the emperor the wrong way were put to death, and the lives of several others were ruined.

Nakako was caught up in the dragon-scale scandal, but survived it. The savage punishment GoYōzei had called for was unprecedented in court society, and no one was willing to take responsibility for carrying out his orders. The retired shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu was consulted, and counseled lenience. So it was that in the tenth month of 1609, Nakako was among the group of former imperial concubines banished indefinitely to the tiny island of Nijima off the eastern shore of Japan in the Pacific Ocean. As luck would have it, the boat carrying her into exile was wrecked in a typhoon, and she was blown ashore on the tip of the Izu Peninsula. Rescued and safely out of harm's way, she lived for fourteen years in the deepest countryside, looked after by a village headman and his family. The villagers of Nijō, where Nakako spent her exile, still remember her, and the family who cared for her still has the manuscripts she left behind. Finally, in 1623, she was allowed to return to the capital. Then in 1641 she took vows and began a new career as a Buddhist nun; the Hōji'in Imperial Convent, where she was abbess, is still there on a quiet back street in Kyoto. She was about eighty years old when in 1671 her long and eventful life came to an end.

Nakako is the only woman involved in the dragon-scale scandal whose life can be traced—"documented" perhaps overstates the case—from birth to death. Previous writers have discussed the scandal in the context of a history of the relationship between two institutions, shogunate and court.³ Their work has been invaluable to me, but my approach is different. Attempting to bring into sharper focus the dim and discontinuous contours of one imperial concubine's life opens a new window on the past, through which we can see events, institutions, people, and even texts that would otherwise remain invisible. Following the traces that Nakako left enables us to glimpse the world of noblewomen who worked as imperial concubines and affords an intimate view of the emperor at the center of that world; we also meet the men who were the concubines' (often anxious) fathers, brothers, even illicit lovers; and in the rarefied realm of imperial convents, we encounter some of the same women again, this time as nuns.

Along the way, we also see samurai women who sacrificed their lives on the fringes of the last great battles of Japan's civil war era. I begin with a short account of GoYōzei, the emperor Nakako served, and the violent world into which he was born and that he experienced at first hand.

All the omens were bad. According to the aged warrior Ōta Gyūichi, a contemporary chronicler of the dragon-scale scandal, when in the twelfth month of 1571 a son was born to Prince Sanehito, "it was divined that he would meet with great misfortune; from his birth he was fated to decline; and he was born with but meager prospects. There was no doubt but what some great misfortune would befall him."⁴ The unlucky child was Sanehito's firstborn son. He was named Kazuhito, "peace and benevolence," and would one day become emperor; but true to the diviners' predictions, he was dogged by misfortune throughout his life and sometimes seems actively to have courted disaster.⁵

Japan in 1571 had been ravaged by civil war for more than a century. In Kyoto, the capital since 794, the emperor "reigned but did not rule," powerless to make rural magnates remit the prescribed revenues from the imperial estates they managed. Like his predecessors for many generations, he was compelled to leave the task of governing the country to his military deputy, the shogun, whose office had been vested in members of the Ashikaga family since 1336. But by the mid sixteenth century, warlords unallied to the Ashikaga controlled much of Japan. Some dominated a single valley; others held domains covering whole provinces and more, which they administered from a central stronghold with the help of their vassals, the samurai. Fighting between rival warlords, who had begun the struggle for military control of the whole country, was endemic throughout Kazuhito's childhood.⁶

Some of the carnage the boy actually witnessed. The first of the three great conquerors of Japan, Oda Nobunaga, managed to bring Kyoto and most of the central provinces under his control. In the process, he dispensed with the Ashikaga shogunate, driving the last shogun from the capital in 1573. In the summer of 1582, however, on the night of the second of the sixth month, one of Nobunaga's generals, Akechi Mitsuhide, attempted to usurp his lord's place. Nobunaga was lodged in the capital at a temple called the Honnōji, accompanied by only a small band of vassals, when he was surrounded by Mitsuhide and his men, who set fire to the building as they attacked. Nobunaga fell on his sword rather than be



Portrait of Emperor GoYōzei by Kano Takanobu (1571–1618). Hanging scroll (107.2 x 60.2 cm), early seventeenth century. Sennyūji, Kyoto.

captured and killed. His son Nobutada holed up in the well-fortified Nijō Palace, originally built by Nobunaga for his own use, then in 1579.¹¹ given to Prince Sanehito, who lived there with his family. Imperial father and son were hurriedly evacuated (on the backs of their servants, according to one account) so that Nobutada and warriors loyal to him could use it as a defensive stronghold in their fight against Mitsuhide's men. But en route to the comparative safety of the imperial palace, both the prince and his son were abandoned barefoot in the street by their escort. As luck would have it, the poetry master Satomura Jōha happened upon the pair, immediately relinquished his palanquin, and sent them on their way.⁷ Back at the Nijō Palace, Nobutada and his supporters managed to hold off Mitsuhide's force for a time, but eventually they too were overwhelmed. Like his father, Nobutada committed suicide to avoid capture and humiliation. The Nijō Palace was reduced to ashes.

Into the breach left by Nobunaga's demise stepped the second of the three great conquerors, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. He was born to a family of farmers, the menfolk of which were from time to time called upon to leave their lands, take up arms, and serve as foot soldiers. Hideyoshi too began his career as a lowly foot soldier in Nobunaga's vassal band. But his ruthless determination and military prowess enabled him to rise to prominence: by 1573 he had been rewarded with command of a castle of his own, and by the time of Nobunaga's death he was one of his most trusted generals. Hideyoshi's first action was to hunt Mitsuhide down. His forces defeated the rebel general's at a battle near the village of Yamazaki in Yamashiro, to the east of Kyoto, but Mitsuhide escaped capture and was heading for his home castle at Sakamoto in the neighboring province of Ōmi when he met his ignominious end, captured by peasants hungry for the reward Hideyoshi offered and stabbed to death with sharpened bamboo sticks. Would-be usurper out of the way, Hideyoshi went on to consolidate his position as heir to Nobunaga's power and ambitions; by 1591, he had succeeded in subjugating the rest of Japan.

With a new military hegemon who had finally brought the entire country under his control, Kyoto enjoyed a brief period of political stability, and Hideyoshi's eager participation in a variety of cultural activities, from flower viewing to Noh drama to tea ceremony, gave these pastimes a new lease on life. Would-be intellectuals from all over Japan flocked to the capital; they sought introductions to the mansions of the great and gathered at poetry parties, and in the process of this scramble for patronage,

the barriers between court nobles, warriors, monks, and those of low rank continued to break down.⁸ Hideyoshi was sensitive about his lack of education, however, and it could be dangerous to spend time with him, as the following anecdote reveals. A group of men were composing poetry together. It was a *renga* or linked-verse party, at which participants took it in turn to compose *ku*, links of five plus seven plus five syllables, alternating with links of seven plus seven syllables. When Hideyoshi proposed the seventeen-syllable link:

<i>okuyama ni</i>	Deep in the mountains,
<i>momiji fumiwake</i>	as I tread the tinted leaves,
<i>naku hotaru</i>	the cry of a firefly!

Jōha responded, “I know of no precedent in previous poetry for ‘the cry of a firefly.’”

Hideyoshi was furious, and he blurted out, “What are you talking about? There’s no creature under heaven that won’t cry if I want to make it cry!”

Nakako’s adoptive grandfather, Hosokawa Yūsai, who was present at this same party, turned to Jōha and said:

“But you are mistaken. There is indeed precedent for fireflies crying, as in the link just composed. It is:

<i>Musashino no</i>	Upon the moor of Musashi,
<i>shino o tsukanete</i>	bundling stalks of
<i>furu ame ni</i>	bamboo in the rain
<i>hotaru narade wa</i>	if not for the firefly,
<i>naku mushi mo nashi</i>	there would be no insect to cry.”

Jōha was aghast at his error, and bowed his head to the floor. [Hideyoshi] was utterly delighted.

The next day Jōha went straight to Yūsai. “Well, I certainly made a fool of myself yesterday,” he said. “That was a terrible loss of face. But may I ask you which anthology that poem is from?”

“With a man of his consequence,” Yūsai said, “you raise questions of precedent? I made that poem up myself.”⁹

In fact Hideyoshi's link was not at all original, but most likely borrowed from the thirteenth-century primer of Japanese poetry, *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*:

<i>okuyama ni</i>	Deep in the mountains,
<i>momiji fumiwake</i>	as I tread the tinted leaves,
<i>naku shika no</i>	the cry of a deer!
<i>koe kiku toki zo</i>	When I hear its voice I feel
<i>aki wa kanashiki</i> ¹⁰	the mournfulness of autumn.

Hideyoshi simply substituted “the cry of a firefly” in his link for “the cry of a deer” in the original. Fireflies, it need hardly be pointed out, do not “cry”; Jōha was perfectly correct to object. Luckily for him, a quick-witted ally stepped in and saved the situation by providing an impromptu fake precedent. Even an acknowledged master of linked verse did not presume to correct the all-powerful military leader.

Prince Sanehito died suddenly, possibly of smallpox, on 1586.7.24, the year he was to have become emperor.¹¹ His father, the aging Emperor Ōgimachi, had been on the throne for almost thirty years and remained determined to abdicate, and so it was that on 1586.9.17 Sanehito's son Kazuhito was hurriedly created prince, the first step to becoming emperor.

In Japan, as readers of *The Tale of Genji* will recall, children of emperors and princes were not automatically princes or princesses themselves. The decision to confer these titles depended upon a variety of factors, such as the rank and power of the child's mother and her family and the relative wealth of the imperial family at the time. By the late sixteenth century, thanks to Hideyoshi, the fortunes of the imperial family had begun to recover after a long period of decline during which important ceremonies had been abandoned or postponed, sometimes for years. Emperor Go-Nara, for example, had had to wait ten years before funds were available for his enthronement ceremony, finally performed in 1536; even worse, the corpse of his grandfather, Emperor GoTsuchimikado, who died in 1500, had lain embalmed for forty-four days until sufficient funds for his funeral could be found.¹² The polygyny practiced by Japan's emperors throughout recorded history, until formally abandoned by Crown Prince Hirohito upon his marriage in 1924, meant that there were often large numbers of imperial offspring. When times were lean, very few could be created prince or princess. Excess males were generally appointed to prestigious

sinecures in the Buddhist hierarchy. The abbot of the Ninnaji, for example, was always an imperial male appointed prince only *after* he had taken vows as a monk. The daughters of emperors were occasionally married to high-ranking noblemen, who were constrained to honor their princess-brides in a manner befitting their imperial status. The alternative solution to the problem of supporting excess females, and the one afforded the majority of imperial daughters from the medieval period through 1871, when members of the imperial family were forbidden from entering religious orders, was to consign them at a young age to the respectable safety of a convent, where they lived out their lives as nuns. Imperial daughters who became nuns were not made princesses.¹³ Prince Sanehito's death must have been unexpected, for none of his male offspring had been appointed prince to succeed him. Thus it was that Sanehito's firstborn, Kazuhito, had to be created prince before, on 1586.11.7, aged fifteen, he was installed as emperor.

The posthumous name by which the emperor is known to Japanese history is GoYōzei, "the later Yōzei." Scholars do not agree about who was responsible for choosing the name. Was it GoYōzei himself? His son and successor, Emperor GoMizuno'ō? Or Nijō Akizane, chancellor at the time of GoYōzei's demise?¹⁴ It was certainly a bizarre choice. A standard Japanese historical encyclopedia notes of the first Emperor Yōzei, who had reigned some 700 years earlier, for the eight-year period 876–884, that his "mad behavior was unending and after a murder in the palace in 884, he was deposed by Regent Fujiwara no Mototsune."¹⁵ An early history is more explicit: the murderer was Yōzei himself, and the victim none other than his own "milk brother," the child of his wet nurse, who by custom should have been his most trusted retainer.¹⁶ GoYōzei, the man Nakako would fall afoul of, modeled himself—or was thought by others to have modeled himself—on this deranged earlier emperor.

Cultivating good relations with the emperor and the court was part of Hideyoshi's strategy of command. One historian has even gone so far as to describe the warrior-ruler's attitude as "pusillanimous" and diagnose him as suffering from a case of "imperatoritis."¹⁷ Certainly Hideyoshi was happy to intervene in court matters when it suited him. In the fifth month of 1585, for example, when a dispute broke out between two scions of the noble families that had been taking it in turns to act as chancellor, Hideyoshi settled the matter by putting himself forward as a compromise candidate. To succeed to the position, however, he would have to be ennobled.

This was easily accomplished by adoption: on 1585.7.11 Hideyoshi became the adopted son of one of the contending chancellors, Konoe Sakihisa, and was duly appointed to the position the same day. The superior of Tamon'in, a subtemple of the great Kōfukuji in Nara, was outraged and described Hideyoshi's self-aggrandizement as something "unheard of in previous ages," "unspeakable and unimaginable," and an act of "madness."¹⁸ But to those actually involved there were, of course, advantages. For facilitating Hideyoshi's ambitions, several noblemen were rewarded with promotions in court or ecclesiastical rank: among them were the disappointed candidate, Nijō Akizane; Akizane's younger brother, abbot of the Daigoji; and Konoe Sakihisa's son and heir Nobutada. Hideyoshi also presented the Konoe with certificates granting them lands valued at 1000 *koku** in the central provinces of Tanba, Yamashiro, and Ōmi "in perpetuity." The other four regental houses were granted lands valued at 500 *koku* each.¹⁹

These were the five most powerful aristocratic families at court: the Konoe, Kujō, Takatsukasa, Ichijō, and Nijō. All were descended in the northern branch of the Fujiwara clan, which had arrogated to itself hereditary rights to the offices of regent and chancellor. In the course of dealings with the rising warrior estate in the late twelfth through the thirteenth centuries, internal rivalries and animosity led to the division of the northern Fujiwara lineage into five distinct houses. Once the offices held by the five had been stripped of any effectual power in the governance of the land, however, they agreed to hold them on a rotating basis, which they did through all subsequent centuries until the nineteenth—except for the ten years 1585–95, when first Hideyoshi, then his nephew and one-time heir Hidetsugu occupied the office of chancellor.

In 1586, a little over a month after GoYōzei's accession, Hideyoshi indulged in the traditional prerogative of chancellors to present one of his daughters to the emperor as his principal wife. Hideyoshi had no natural daughters, so he adopted one: Konoe Sakiko, daughter of Konoe Sakihisa. When Sakiko went to court as consort (*nyōgo*, one rank below empress), she was the first young woman to be appointed to this position in more

*One *koku*, about 150 kilograms of unpolished rice, was the rough measure of the amount of grain required to feed one adult male for one year. Income that accrued to a person or institution from estates or enfeoffments was calculated in terms of the number of *koku* produced by that land.

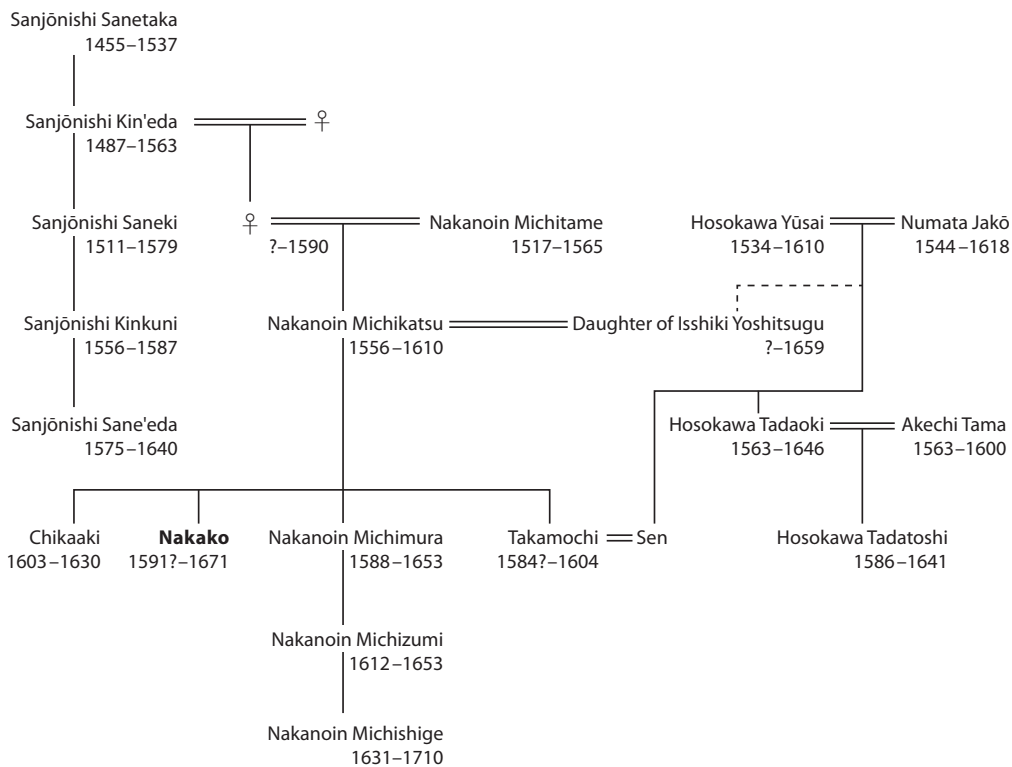
than 200 years. During the turbulent era of the Ashikaga shoguns, the final century of which saw incessant warfare both in and out of the capital, emperors ceased appointing their wives to the rank of consort and above; the imperial household no longer had sufficient income to support an empress and the separate entourage to which she was entitled.²⁰ This effectively barred the daughters of the five regental families from becoming imperial consorts, since they could not accept appointment to a lesser position. Nor could they be seen to marry “beneath” them and so, like excess daughters of Japanese emperors, many were made nuns and lived out their lives in convents. The Konoe were the premier regental family; sending a daughter to court to be consort of Emperor GoYōzei—even if she had first been adopted by the upstart Hideyoshi—was a return to form for them. And, of course, arranging this was another way that Hideyoshi insinuated himself with the ranking nobility.

When Konoe Sakiko was presented at court on 1586.12.16, she was eleven years old. The emperor was fifteen. It was the custom for aristocratic males, when they came of age, to be provided with an experienced older woman who would take responsibility for the young man’s sexual initiation, so we may assume that Sakiko was not the first woman in GoYōzei’s life; nor would she be the only one. Sakiko’s first cousin Taneko, the daughter of one of Sakihisa’s younger sisters, would also join the emperor’s intimate service in years to come.²¹ But Sakiko remained the highest ranking of GoYōzei’s women, and without a doubt the most important of them. In the twenty years between 1590, when she was fifteen, and 1610, by which time she was thirty-five, she gave birth to no fewer than twelve of GoYōzei’s twenty-five children, more than any of his other women.

Hideyoshi’s most grandiloquent gesture as GoYōzei’s enthusiastic vassal, more presumptuous still than providing his adopted daughter as consort, was his staging of an imperial progress. In the fourth month of 1588, it was arranged that GoYōzei would deign to visit the Jurakutei, Hideyoshi’s recently completed mansion in Kyoto. Early on the morning of the fourteenth, Chancellor Hideyoshi went to the imperial palace anxious to direct the arrangements of the courtiers who would accompany the emperor. Before noon, GoYōzei departed the Hall of Ceremonies and, with Hideyoshi himself holding up the train of the emperor’s robes, proceeded to board his Phoenix Palanquin. Escorted by rows of courtiers (Nakako’s father, living in exile, was not invited), the palanquin slowly made its way through the streets of the capital, some 6,000 warriors guarding the route.

Following the emperor, in a total of 30 separate palanquins, were his mother and his grandfather, the retired Emperor Ōgimachi; his Consort Sakiko and her gentlewomen; and numerous female palace officials. The procession was so long that when the emperor's Phoenix Palanquin reached the middle gate of the Jurakutei, Hideyoshi's ox-drawn carriage had not even left the imperial palace enclosure. Hideyoshi was guarded by 72 outriders and followed by at least 24 daimyo—all military men, reportedly grateful for the opportunity to associate, however briefly, with the nobility. Festivities at the Jurakutei continued for five days of banqueting; entertainments such as dancing, music, and poetry; and lavish exchanges of gifts, among them Hideyoshi's bestowing upon the emperor "all the ground rents within the city of Kyoto in perpetuity."²²

In his later years, Hideyoshi developed ambitions for the emperor and court that seem positively insane: in 1592 he launched a full-scale invasion of Korea, the first step in a lunatic campaign to conquer all of China and put a Japanese emperor on the throne in Peking. GoYōzei obliged Hideyoshi by providing imperial orders "to advance to Korea," but his correspondence with the hegemon reveals that he had no interest in actually traveling to the continent, let alone ruling over it.²³ Instead, he was content to be presented with some of the loot from the offensive, in particular printed books, equipment, and movable type.²⁴ The attack on Korea was renewed in 1597, but after Hideyoshi's death on 1598.8.18 the brutal and expensive campaign was swiftly abandoned. Japanese troops withdrew from the peninsula and returned home. It was not long before there was a colossal battle between Hideyoshi's vassals to determine which would succeed him.



The Nakanoin family, showing their relationships with the Sanjōnishi and the Hosokawa families.

Chapter 1

A COURTIER'S LIFE, IN AND OUT OF THE WORLD

Friendship is certainly the finest balm for the pangs of disappointed love.

—JANE AUSTEN, *NORTHANGER ABBEY*

Just days before the battle that would determine Hideyoshi's successor, Nakako's father, Nakanoin Michikatsu, played a crucial role in rescuing a cache of documents from a castle in imminent danger of destruction. These documents were the record of a tradition of esoteric teachings that claimed to transmit the true (and of course secret) interpretations of the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, the first imperially commissioned anthology of Japanese poetry, compiled about 905. In the year 1600, the last living man to whom these teachings had been entrusted in their entirety was the sixty-six-year-old warrior Hosokawa Yūsai, the man who had manufactured the fake precedent to save his friend Jōha from Hideyoshi's wrath. In the seventh month of 1600, Yūsai was besieged in his castle at Tanabe in the province of Tango on the Sea of Japan, surrounded by a force estimated at 15,000 men. Michikatsu was familiar with the castle: for almost twenty years, he had lived in exile there under Yūsai's protection. When after nearly two months the siege showed no signs of ending, it was natural that GoYōzei should choose Michikatsu to lead a party of envoys to Tanabe in an attempt to free Yūsai and save the treasured esoterica. How had it come about that Nakako's father (and later Nakako herself) spent so many years in Yūsai's company?

NAKANON MICHIKATSU

Like many noblemen in the civil war era, Michikatsu led an eventful life both in and out of the capital. He was born in Kyoto on 1556.5.6 to a mid-level aristocratic family. There were about one hundred noble families at this time, and the whole of court society—male and female, officeholders and nonofficeholders—probably numbered about one thousand people.¹ We have already encountered the top-ranking regental families; below them were four middling levels of nobility, the echelon to which the Nakanoin belonged. They were one of three “ministerial families,” which meant that the highest court office to which male members could rise was that of minister: in ascending order of prestige, palace minister, minister of the right, minister of the left. Beneath these mid-level nobles were a group of still lower-level families, whose members we know little about—except for the crucial fact that they rarely, if ever, rose to a rank that would enable them to enjoy the privilege of appearing in the presence of the emperor.

For most of Michikatsu's early life, fighting between rival warrior bands engulfed large areas of the country. The economies of all aristocratic families were precarious, as their hereditary rights to income from agricultural estates were encroached upon and eroded by provincial strongmen. The Nakanoin were no exception: in order to secure receipt of at least a modicum of income, Michikatsu's father had to spend long periods of time away from the capital, overseeing the family estates in the province of Kaga, northeast of Kyoto. His principal wife, from an aristocratic family of identical ministerial rank, remained in Kyoto with their children. Michikatsu's father had a secondary wife and at least two children in Kaga, and it was there that he died in 1565, when Michikatsu was just nine years old.²

Despite their plundering of aristocratic privilege, Japan's warriors, even the most powerful, never sought to usurp the imperial throne. Instead, they aspired to the artistic accomplishments of the aristocrats from whom they had wrested the wealth and honors of the court, and they were prepared to pay to acquire them. For their part, aristocrats—rather like Renaissance scholars of the Bible—were “conscious of standing within a stream of cultural and intellectual achievement, from which they benefited and to which they were called to contribute.”³ They also came to realize that with careful husbandry, their polite accomplishments—whether in poetry, painting, calligraphy, music, or even their version of kickball—could serve as a source of income. Children of the nobility, both boys and

girls, were therefore schooled in the family arts from a young age. When they grew up, the boys could expect to be called upon to teach what they knew; the girls could expect to put their education to use either as gentlewomen serving in the houses of higher-ranking aristocratic families or in the imperial palace. Noblewomen were also occasionally used by their families to forge protective marital alliances with powerful warriors, who found that the cultural knowledge and social connections of their aristocratic trophy wives could be valuable assets. The Nakanoin family arts were literary: they composed poetry and they worked hard to preserve both the physical texts of Japanese literature and the knowledge of how to interpret them.

As an aristocratic male, Michikatsu was trained to read classical Chinese—the written *lingua franca* of the educated elite in East Asia throughout recorded history until the early twentieth century—and to compose Chinese-style poetry and prose. He also learned to compose Japanese poetry. Given his father's frequent absence from the capital, Michikatsu was likely tutored as a boy by his maternal grandfather, Sanjōnishi Kin'eda. Kin'eda was heir to the tradition of classical scholarship and poetic composition established by his father, Sanjōnishi Sanetaka, who had devoted his life to the study of both the Chinese classics and Japanese historical and literary works. As a courtier in close attendance upon three successive emperors,⁴ Sanetaka had access to books and manuscripts in the imperial collection, which he collated and copied. His imperial connections were immeasurably enhanced by his wife, whose two sisters worked at the palace: her elder sister served Emperor GoTsuchimikado; her younger sister, who served GoTsuchimikado's son Emperor GoKashiwabara, also gave birth to his heir, Emperor GoNara.⁵ Despite these close ties with the imperial family, however, life for Sanetaka and his wife was never secure. The Ōnin Wars of 1467–77 had left the capital in ruins; Sanetaka's residence was destroyed by fire no less than four times over the course of his life. To make ends meet, he was forced from time to time to sell important texts in his collection, as well as make copies of these and other texts specifically for sale. Sanetaka is known to have sold complete manuscripts of *The Tale of Genji*, for example, at least three times over the course of his life: in 1506, 1520, and 1529.⁶

Compared to their tenth- and eleventh-century ancestors, sixteenth-century aristocrats were a poor and sorry lot, their mansions reduced to ashes by arson attacks and their estate income depleted almost to nothing. At times, when yet another section of the capital burned, it must have

seemed as if their very world was on the brink of disappearing. The response of some was to cling ever more tightly to what remained of their cultural capital, especially literary texts and the practices that had grown up around them. These included giving lectures on the interpretation of important texts, compiling written commentaries on which such lectures were based, and holding parties where poetry was publicly presented. Paying warrior students sometimes attended, even hosted, poetry-composing parties, where they could rub shoulders with their noble, if impoverished teachers—even though, as in the case of Hideyoshi, such gatherings could be tense affairs.

Sanetaka's son and grandsons were brought up to succeed to the scholarly lineage he founded. And Michikatsu—Sanetaka's great-grandson—was incorporated into this lineage and inculcated with Sanjōnishi learning from childhood. Aged just four, he was listed among the guests at a banquet held by his cousin Kujō Tanemichi to commemorate the completion of a series of lectures that Kin'eda had given on *The Tale of Genji*. The lectures were begun in 1555; interrupted by civil war, they were finally completed on 1560.11.5, and the banquet was held six days later, on 11.11. Some fifty-five men and women contributed poems to the occasion, one for each chapter of the tale (including the nonexistent "Hidden in Clouds" chapter). Michikatsu is among them, listed by his childhood name, Matsuyashamaru, as the author of this poem on the twenty-sixth chapter of *Genji*, "The Pink":

*suzushisa wa
izuku wa ari to mo
nadeshiko no
tokonatsukashiki
tsuyu no asagao*⁷

Though cool beauty may
be found in many a place,
the inviting charm
of this little pink is glimpsed
in her freshly woken face.

The chapter contrasts the beauty of Tō no Chūjō's daughters Tamakazura, Kokiden no Nyōgo, and Kumoinokari, who all retain an elegantly cool decorum despite the summer heat, with their recently discovered sister from Ōmi, who is hotly enthusiastic about everything. The "freshly woken face" is that of Kumoinokari, caught napping by her father, "the flush in her cheeks . . . pure enchantment."⁸ Clearly, this poem about the nature of allure was written for little Matsuyashamaru by someone else, most likely his grandfather, Kin'eda.

Michikatsu's participation—however symbolic—in the 1560 celebratory *Genji* banquet provides a good example of how his older male relatives trained him to make his way as a courtier and his living as a scholar from an early age. His appearance at the palace in the entourage of one or another of the emperor's middle-ranking courtiers is mentioned in several diary entries. On 1562.1.18, “the Nakanoin boy” is at the palace and has a sip of saké; on 1563.1.15, he is among the company of courtiers who serve saké to the emperor.⁹ The following year, he began to participate in the round of annual observances and assorted festivities at court: those held on the first day of each month, for example, and the Tanabata festival, celebrating the once-a-year meeting of the lover-stars Vega and Altair on the seventh day of the seventh month. He also took part in archery competitions and kickball matches. Michikatsu seems to have been fond of kickball and often joined in formal matches at the palace as well as informal gatherings in the gardens of his friends' residences. As the game was played by Japanese aristocrats, the aim was to keep the ball in the air, rather like hackysack; the winning team was the one that managed to keep the ball in play for the highest number of kicks.¹⁰ To one match, organized by Prince Sanehito and held on 1575.7.3 in the presence of Oda Nobunaga, Michikatsu wore a purple jacket and trousers woven from the tough fibers of the kudzu vine.¹¹ He is mentioned too as a fine flute player who was frequently called upon to perform in concerts at the palace.

In accordance with custom, Michikatsu was awarded court rank for the first time as a baby and regularly promoted thereafter. His first real official assignment would appear to be his appointment, in 1569, to the position of major in the Palace Guards. This was one of the guards' units charged with keeping watch over the inner palace complex and assisting the emperor in his round of ceremonies.¹² In 1572 he was promoted to colonel in the same unit. By 1575 he had become an imperial adviser, and in 1579, aged twenty-three, he held joint appointments as chamberlain in the Ministry of Palace Affairs and, briefly, acting middle counselor on the Council of State. He resigned this position on 1580.1.17 in favor of his uncle, Minase Kanenari.

Things seemed to be looking up at last. In his diary, only fragments of which survive, Michikatsu records the visit of one Genzaburō from Kaga, where the family estates were located. Inoue Muneo, Michikatsu's biographer, speculates that the man was a steward responsible for ensuring that income from the estates was remitted. At the very least, the young courtier did not have to live in the countryside as his father had been forced to

do, but could continue his education in the capital.¹³ In the summer of 1569, when Michikatsu was thirteen, his uncle Sanjōnishi Saneki had finally returned to Kyoto after more than a decade spent earning his living in the entourage of the Imagawa, a provincial warrior family with courtly pretensions based in Sunpu. The Imagawa had lost out to surrounding warlords; their territories carved up, they could no longer patronize the courtiers who had gathered around them. For the next ten years, until Saneki's death in 1579, Michikatsu was able to read and study texts with him. When Saneki was summoned to the palace of Prince Sanehito to lecture on *Genji*, Michikatsu accompanied him, and in his spare time he copied a text of *Genji*, probably recording notes from his uncle's lectures as he went along. On 1579.11.22, when Sanehito moved to the Nijō Palace presented him by Oda Nobunaga, Michikatsu carried the prince's sword in the inaugural procession; and in 1580 Michikatsu received the honor of being asked to organize his New Year poetry party.¹⁴

IMPERIAL CENSURE

When they were not practicing the family arts, some nobles were living recklessly—for who knew what death and devastation tomorrow might bring? In 1571, when Michikatsu was fifteen years old, he witnessed with other terrified residents of the capital an orgy of violence dreadful even in that violent age—Oda Nobunaga's destruction of Enryakuji, the temple complex on Mount Hiei northeast of Kyoto that was founded at the end of the eighth century and had been the beneficiary of imperial and aristocratic patronage for eight hundred years. Here in Lamers's translation is the description by the Portuguese Jesuit Luís Fróis, who was in Kyoto at the time:

On . . . the last day of September . . . the great temple . . . located on the top of the mountain was first burned down, and thereafter, Nobunaga sent many harquebusiers into the mountains and woods to hunt for bonzes who might be hiding there. The soldiers were to spare nobody, and they executed this order promptly. This victory did not satisfy Nobunaga, however. As he wanted to quench his thirst for revenge still more and thus strengthen his reputation, he ordered his whole army to immediately devastate the remaining houses of the bonzes, and to burn down all 400 or so temples of the very famous university of Fiyenoíyama [Mount

Hiei]. On that day, all temples were ravaged, burnt, and turned into ashes. [. . .] I have been told that close to 1500 bonzes died, as did an equal number of secular men, women, and children.¹⁵

Fróis was delighted at the destruction: "Praise be to God's omnipotence and ultimate goodness, for he has ordered such a great hindrance to be punished with extinction," he wrote. But Japanese witnesses were (rightly) shocked and appalled at such sacrilegious carnage—as one courtier exclaimed in his diary, "the destruction of the Buddhist law itself! Incomprehensible, utterly incomprehensible! Is this the sort of thing a secular ruler ought to be doing?"¹⁶

A few years later, toward the end of the second month of 1579, Michikatsu was returning home one evening from a visit to Prince Sanehito when he was caught in the rain and took shelter at the colossal Chion'in temple complex. One readily imagines the sense of unease with which he witnessed a troop of mounted samurai pass by—150 of them, he noted in his diary.¹⁷

Yet might it be that some who observed the warriors' brutality and Nobunaga's arrant indifference to retribution, divine or secular, also felt freed from certain constraints on their own behavior? For despite the best efforts of the courtier-scholars who raised him, Michikatsu seems to have grown into a young man with a taste for dangerous escapades. An entry dated 1580.6.22 in the *Daily Records* kept by the women employed in the Bureau of Palace Attendants reads:

On the occasion of the Nakanoin former Middle Counselor's scandalous behavior and consequent punishment, the twenty-one members of the inner and outer guard units were warned, "know that each and every one of you shall be punished" [if you commit similar offenses] and sent on their way. Moreover, Grand Counselor Yotsutsuji was sent as imperial emissary to the place where Lady Iyo's father, the lay monk Tanshō, lives. He told him that inasmuch as the Lady Iyo's conduct at this time had been disgraceful, he should expect that she would be punished likewise.¹⁸

Michikatsu, twenty-four years old in 1580, had frequented the imperial palace from childhood and was intimately familiar with the place. His duties allowed him the liberty to move about; and his diary from this period describes several musical soirées that actually took place in the office where the palace attendants worked, which ostensibly was off-limits to

men.¹⁹ It cannot have been difficult to come into contact, even accidentally, with women he would never have had the opportunity to meet elsewhere. The brief, elliptic account of his crime and punishment in the *Daily Records* suggests that he had been caught *in flagrante delicto* with a certain Lady Iyo. From her name and other references to her in the *Daily Records* we know that she was a lower-ranking gentlewoman who had served at the palace for more than six years; probably, then, she was in her late teens or at most her early twenties. She also seems to have been a woman the reigning Emperor Ōgimachi regarded as his. One scholar demurs, pointing out that by the time of Michikatsu's misdemeanor, the emperor was in his sixty-fourth year—that is, presumably no longer sexually active—and that Lady Iyo is more likely to have been beloved of another, high-ranking man whose side the emperor took.²⁰ But age is no barrier to sexual jealousy, of course. Another scholar suggests that Michikatsu aroused the emperor's ire by refusing to send his younger sister to court as an imperial concubine.²¹ There is no evidence for this theory either; it seems safer to trust the account in the *Daily Records*, written by women who were there at the time.

The sanction to which Michikatsu was subject for his offense was known as "imperial censure," a rare form of punishment meted out within the court to those who incurred the wrath of the emperor. It required no legal process before the Council of State or other deliberative body, but was executed directly by the head of the emperor's private secretariat, the Kurōdo no Tō. It could thus be terminated only by pardon of the emperor himself. Typically the offender was suspended from office and sentenced to house arrest, and occasionally banishment, sometimes for many years. Emperor Ōgimachi seems to have been particularly irascible, for over the course of his thirty-year reign, he punished half a dozen courtiers with imperial censure.²²

On 1580.6.18, Michikatsu fled the capital.²³ He had been banished from court, but he had not been sent into exile. It had been intended that he remain in Kyoto under house arrest, his penalty exclusion from court life—a painful enough punishment, since it meant exclusion from the world to which everyone he knew belonged, alienation from the very activities that constituted his daily life. Rather than suffer this and risk further punishment—possibly banishment to a distant place of exile—what Michikatsu did was to abscond from the capital, of his own volition.

An undated manuscript in the Imperial Archives provides Michikatsu's biographer with the means to speculate about his initial movements. It is

a single scroll in the hand of Prince Toshihito, Emperor GoYōzei's younger brother, recording thirteen poems by Michikatsu, each on a different subject.²⁴ The tenth poem in this collection is prefaced with the note "the call of the cuckoo upon passing the barrier at Kiyomi," a poetic way of referring to the ancient barrier gate on the Tōkaidō, the Eastern Sea Road, that once regulated passage to and from the eastern provinces of the country. "Kiyomigata" in the poem itself is an old name for the nearby coast. Both barrier and coast were located in the province of Suruga.

<i>Kiyomigata</i>	Oh gate to that barrier
<i>moru hito mo naki</i>	at Kiyomigata
<i>seki no to wa</i>	through which none slips!
<i>shibashi todomuru</i>	Halt even if but for a moment
<i>yama hototogisu</i>	that mountain cuckoo.

Cuckoos are always associated with summer in Japanese poetry, so we know what season it is. The bird's call is fleeting, leading one on, yet always out of reach—thus the poet's conceit here, asking the barrier gate to block the cuckoo's escape in order that he may enjoy its call once more. Based on this poem, Inoue suggests that Michikatsu might first have gone to Suruga. His uncle Saneki had spent many years living in Sunpu, the capital of Suruga, and though the Imagawa were long gone, perhaps there were still people there who had known his older relative and with whom the young man could take refuge.

Obviously a single poem cannot offer proof positive, and Inoue does not press the point. He does draw our attention to two others in the collection, however. One is this classic "morning-after" poem:

Upon parting, feeling that our chances of meeting again were but slight:

<i>ushi ya tote</i>	Crow of the cock
<i>uramihatenishi</i>	that I thoroughly resented,
<i>tori no ne o</i>	crying out "Oh woe!"
<i>mata itoubeki</i>	How I wish I might have yet
<i>akatsuki mogana</i>	one more dawn to detest it.

Good manners demanded that a man should send a "morning-after" poem to his lover immediately upon returning home from a tryst. Traditionally, the crow of the cock at dawn signaled that it was time for a man

to drag himself away from his love and depart, before anyone who might see him was awake. In this poem, the male speaker—let us call him Michikatsu—has in the past resented the cock's crow for forcing him to leave his lover's side, but now that he and she are to be separated, perhaps forever, he longs more than ever to hear the cock crow again—to be woken from a night of love with her again.

The other is the last poem in the collection, in which Michikatsu makes specific reference to his plight.

Having been punished by the previous Emperor's [character missing],
hardly knowing which path to take:

tsurenaki o
matsu to ya hito no
omouran
michi mo naki made
areshi waga yado

Does she even now
yearn for me, saying she will
wait through troubled times?
And I in my lodging,
so ruined no path leads to it.

The manuscript appears to date from the reign of GoYōzei, so “the previous Emperor” would refer to Ōgimachi. Despite the depredations of insects that have eaten away part of the text, the poet's use of *hito* and *omou* together make it clear that this is a love poem. He is living in much reduced circumstances, unsure what to do and whom to turn to. But his principal concern is the lover (*hito*) he has left behind. Does she still think of him? Yearn for him (*omouran*)? Is she prepared to wait out the scandal, wait until he can return to her? Nineteen years would pass before Michikatsu was pardoned and allowed to return to court. We do not know what became of his Lady Iyo, or whether he ever saw her again. The times being as they were, and life being as it is, probably he did not.

HOSOKAWA YŪSAI

Michikatsu's whereabouts in 1581 are unknown. At some point during this year, however, he took refuge with the warrior Hosokawa Yūsai, who had once been a student of his late uncle Sanjōnishi Saneki. Michikatsu would spend the remainder of his long exile from court living under Yūsai's protection.

Yūsai was both aristocrat and warrior.²⁵ His mother was born to the low-ranking yet still noble Kiyohara family, distinguished for its scholarship of the Chinese classics. For a time she had been a concubine of the twelfth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshiharu, and she was pregnant with his child when it was decided that the shogun should take as his principal wife a daughter from the much higher-ranking Konoe family. The Kiyohara daughter was married off to a warrior, and her child by Yoshiharu—the future Yūsai—was later adopted into another warrior house, the Hosokawa. He was nurtured in the Kiyohara academic tradition and received instruction in such courtly arts as kickball and the composition of Japanese poetry; but he also maintained close ties with his natural father, Yoshiharu, and his two younger half-brothers, Yoshiteru and Yoshiaki, who became the thirteenth and fifteenth Ashikaga shoguns respectively.

Eventually, however, Yūsai became a trusted vassal of Oda Nobunaga. At Nobunaga's suggestion, Yūsai's eldest son, Tadaoki, was married to the daughter of another general—none other than the Akechi Mitsuhide who would one day betray Nobunaga. The young woman's name was Tama, and she was the same age as Tadaoki. Mitsuhide's attempt to usurp Nobunaga's place put Tama and the Hosokawa house in great danger. It was imperative to disassociate themselves from Mitsuhide's folly, as quickly as possible. On 1582.6.3, the day after Nobunaga died at the Honnōji, word reached the Hosokawa. Both father and son were in their province of Tango on the Sea of Japan, preparing to join Hideyoshi, who—until he had news of Nobunaga's death—had been doing battle in western Japan. Yūsai's reaction was swift. He “left the world” by becoming a lay monk. He took the tonsure and the monkish name Yūsai Genshi, and he passed the headship of the Hosokawa house to Tadaoki. He also sent a pledge of allegiance to Hideyoshi, and to make it clear to all that his son was now in charge, he ceded the main Hosokawa castle at Miyazu to him and moved to a much smaller castle along the coast at Tanabe.

What to do with Tama? They could repudiate her by sending her back to her natal family, where undoubtedly she would have suffered the same fate as her mother, elder sister, and younger brother, all of whom were stabbed to death by Tama's brother-in-law before he killed himself and set fire to the main keep of Akechi's Sakamoto Castle.²⁶ Or they could risk a wait-and-see approach. After discussion between Tadaoki and the house elders, it was decided that for the time being Tama would be sent away to a mountain village in the former Akechi province of Tanba. This would enable the

Hosokawa to demonstrate that they had divorced this daughter of a traitor while at the same time keeping her out of harm's way.²⁷ Tama remained locked away for nearly two years. In 1584, Hideyoshi allowed her out of hiding on the condition that she move to Osaka, where the Hosokawa and other daimyo houses each kept a mansion; there, under the hegemon's gaze, she was effectively a hostage, held to ensure her husband's loyalty to the Toyotomi cause. The proffering and exchange of hostages was standard procedure in early modern Japan, part of a "politics of family" that also encompassed alliances created by marriage, concubinage, and adoption.²⁸ In 1586, in order to persuade Ieyasu to leave the safety of his home province and come to Kyoto, Hideyoshi went so far as to send his own mother as a hostage. This ultimate surety Ieyasu could not refuse, though when he left Hamamatsu Castle to travel to the capital, the rooms around Hideyoshi's mother's apartments were stacked with firewood—just in case.²⁹ Akechi Tama survived the crisis of her father's treachery by first going into hiding and then becoming a hostage. In years to come, she would have the opportunity to repay the trust her husband's family had shown her with her life.

In 1581, however, when Michikatsu was adrift and in need of help, the Hosokawa had only recently wrested control of the province of Tango from its former governing family, the Isshiki. Though Yūsai had long lived the life of a warrior, he had grown up in the company of aristocrats and was no stranger to their plight of dispossession and dispersal. The two men had come to know each other via the Sanjōnishi literary circle they both belonged to in the capital. Yūsai was in every way Michikatsu's senior: he was not only older by twenty-two years but also vastly more learned. Nonetheless, he seems to have made Michikatsu welcome in every way he could. One favor he did his noble guest was to provide him with a wife.

MICHIKATSU MARRIES

Michikatsu's wife is described in the genealogies as "the daughter of Hosokawa Hyōbu-no-Tayū Fujitaka, the lay monk Yūsai, but in reality the daughter of Isshiki Sakyō-no-Daibu Yoshitsugu, lord of the province of Tango."³⁰ What does this complex designation mean? To answer this question, we must briefly recount the relationship between the Hosokawa and the Isshiki family to which the young woman was born. The story serves to illustrate many features of this savage age: first, the destruction of the

old Ashikaga order by new forces allied to powerful provincial warlords; second, the unceasing brutality of the warfare in which warriors engaged; third, the fragility of the loyalties that such incessant warfare produced; and finally, the role of women in making all sorts of bonds between men, from political alliances to literary friendships.

The Isshiki were a prominent branch of the Ashikaga clan and had been military governors of the province of Tango since 1336. In 1575, Oda Nobunaga confirmed their tenure of Tango, granting the province in fief to the ninth-generation head of the house, Isshiki Yoshimichi.³¹ Before long, however, Yoshimichi seems to have fallen out with Nobunaga, who commanded Hosokawa father and son to take the province from him. With the assistance of Akechi Mitsuhide, the Hosokawa began their campaign in the fourth month of 1578. The local warriors seem to have taken the attack upon their Isshiki overlord as an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with his rule. They deserted Yoshimichi en masse, and he was left with only a hundred men to defend him. He fled to the Nakayama fort, the stronghold of one Numata Kageyu. It was his ill fortune that Numata was secretly in league with the Hosokawa. Here Yoshimichi met his end—in battle according to one account, by his own hand in another.³²

Next, the Hosokawa were confronted by Isshiki Yoshimichi's son. Different accounts call him by so many different names—Gorō, Yoshiari, Mitsuobu, Yoshisada, Yoshitoshi—that it is impossible to assign him a definitive appellation. Indeed, one secondary work tells essentially the same story of his death under two different names.³³ This son of Yoshimichi seems to have opposed the invasion of his father's province with considerable vigor and success, despite the desertion of so many of the family's vassals. Eventually a compromise typical of the era was proposed by Mitsuhide: Yoshimichi's son would relinquish his main seat at Hachimanyama to Yūsai and move permanently to the smaller Yuminoki fort; he would then marry Iya, one of Yūsai's daughters.³⁴ The offer of a Hosokawa daughter in marriage would provide the Isshiki son with an honorable means to accept defeat and avoid destruction. For the Hosokawa, forging an alliance with a defeated house head would enable them to reassign the loyalty of a former enemy and absorb his vassal band into their own. The son accepted the Hosokawa offer. Nobunaga too seems to have approved this solution, and granted him lands valued at 20,000 *koku* in Tango.

Whether the planned marriage ever took place is not entirely certain. One version of the story says that the young man was ambushed and

murdered on his way to the wedding banquet.³⁵ Another version has it that following Yūsai's official enfeoffment in the seventh month of 1580, Yoshimichi's son married his new lord's daughter Iya, but two years later, in 1582, he betrayed the Hosokawa. In retaliation, they lured him to a banquet and murdered him.³⁶ In support of the latter version, Iya is described in the Hosokawa house genealogy as "wife of Isshiki Yoshiari; later married to Yoshida Kaneharu."³⁷ It is conceivable too that the son-in-law's betrayal of the Hosokawa consisted in joining forces with Akechi Mitsuhide following the latter's rebellion against Oda Nobunaga.³⁸ The murder of the young man is vividly described in a later account:

In Tango the lord of the province was named Isshiki. After Nobunaga assumed rule of the realm, he gave the entire province of Tango to Hosokawa Yūsai. Yūsai took Isshiki as his son-in-law, allotted him a minute portion of his fief, and installed him in the castle at Yuminoki. The day after Nobunaga's death, Sansai [Yūsai's son Tadaoki] summoned the [former] lord, slew him with his own hand, and seized his castle. This lord was the husband of Sansai's elder sister. On that occasion, a man named Yoneda Kenmotsu came bearing a sword. Inadvertently he placed it at the right of Sansai, where it would be difficult for him to grasp it. Yoneda, realizing his error, as he withdrew kicked the sword with his foot as if by accident, and then as if to set things right, placed it on Sansai's left. In the course of the drinking, Sansai grabbed it, drew, and in the same stroke cut [Isshiki] down.³⁹

It was in the midst of these violent events that Nakako's father, Michikatsu, arrived on the scene. We do not know precisely when Yūsai arranged for his noble guest-in-disgrace to marry—perhaps when it became clear that his stay in Tango would be a prolonged one. The woman he provided was the daughter of one Isshiki Yoshitsugu—a man whose name appears in none of the accounts of the battles of this era, though clearly he was a member of the defeated Isshiki house. In a procedure common at the time, Yūsai seems to have adopted her as his daughter before presenting her to his guest. Arranging for Michikatsu to marry a Hosokawa daughter, even an adopted one, enhanced her prestige and flattered her natal family at the same time as it made a liaison with a woman of the warrior estate more palatable to an aristocrat, Michikatsu.

MICHIKATSU RENOUNCES THE WORLD

Michikatsu and his wife were furnished with living quarters in a turret that formed part of Yūsai's retirement castle at Tanabe, present-day Maizuru City. This fact enables us to date their marriage to sometime after Yūsai's decision to take vows in the immediate aftermath of Nobunaga's death in the sixth month of 1582. Tanabe Castle, though built on an inlet of the Sea of Japan, feels as if it is in the middle of the mountains. Even today, winding north on the train from Kyoto through valleys so deep they remain in darkness for much of the day, one arrives expectantly in Maizuru only to find the town surrounded still by mountains forested with cryptomeria, Japanese cedar. From the turret of Tanabe Castle one might have seen, if not the sea, then perhaps the Isazu River that widens as it flows into Wakasa Bay, but the Nakanojin family's principal views would have been of rice paddies bordered by mountains. In late autumn cold winds blow from the north and even the daytime sky is dark with clouds. Winters are cold and damp. In weather forecasts for the region during 2000–01, the predicted daily maximum temperature for Maizuru was almost always lower than that for Kyoto, and even when fine weather was forecast for southern regions, rain or snow would be forecast for the north. *Shigure*, chill, autumnal showers, seem to be frequent too. There would have been little Michikatsu could do but huddle over a brazier for warmth.

Inoue transcribes several poems from this period that reveal Michikatsu rehearsing the expression of disgruntlement at his misfortune. Here are two from a hundred-poem sequence composed during the night of 1584.11.12.⁴⁰ The first is on “admiring the blossoms”:

<i>yoso ni shite</i>	Away from it all,
<i>omou mo hana ni</i>	how I resent the blossoms!
<i>urami are ya</i>	Especially when
<i>ōmiyabito no</i>	I recall the feelings
<i>haru no kokoro o</i>	they inspire in courtiers in spring.

Even the imagined sight of cherry blossoms upsets him, he claims—the eleventh month, when Michikatsu composed these poems, is midwinter. Another poem is on the subject of regret:

<i>kono mama ni</i>	Should I rot away
<i>kuchi mo hatenaba</i>	here like seaweed raked up
<i>moshiogusa</i>	along the shore—
<i>kakiatsumetaru</i>	then shall my writings count for
<i>kai mo araji o</i>	no more than shells on the strand.

A series of related images—seaweed raked up on the shore (only to rot), shells piled up on the strand (only to die)—enables Michikatsu to explore the subject he has set himself. In another hundred-poem sequence, the same subject, regret, is given a different treatment:

<i>yo o urami</i>	Angry with the world,
<i>hito o kakochite</i>	complaining about others—
<i>hate wa mata</i>	to my amazement
<i>mi o kaeriminu</i>	I end up paying no heed
<i>mi o zo odoroku</i> ⁴¹	to my own situation!

By continuing to “work out” poetically, he honed his technique while asserting his place within the courtly tradition that was central to his being.

Like all intellectual activity, composing poetry surely also provided Michikatsu with a profound source of solace. On 1586.4.8 he began a “one hundred poems in one hundred days” sequence, which he duly finished on 7.19. Here is his beautiful poem on the topic “lamplight in the still of night”:

<i>shizuka naru</i>	In the still of night,
<i>kokoro no tomo to</i>	though I share a lamp with
<i>kakagetemo</i>	the true friend of my heart,
<i>ukimi ni kuraki</i>	to one lost in misery
<i>mado no tomoshibi</i> ⁴²	dark the flicker on the shade.

The “true friend of Michikatsu’s heart” is, of course, Yūsai. Together they sit, reading and talking late into the night. A peaceful scene—but for the gloom enveloping Michikatsu, seeming to darken even the lamplight on the paper window shade.

Later that year, on 8.13, Michikatsu, despairing of reinstatement at court, took vows as a lay monk. Like his mentor Yūsai, he was politically rather than religiously motivated. Michikatsu did not enter a temple, nor did he renounce women or drink. But taking vows and shaving his head

indicated that he had abandoned any hope he might still have had for reinstatement to court office and further promotion in court rank. His wish was that by casting off worldly ambition, he might be permitted to return to Kyoto and pass on the headship of the Nakanoin family to a suitable heir. It is likely too that he had heard of Emperor Ōgimachi's desire to abdicate and hoped that with the impending change of reign, he might be forgiven his former reckless behavior.

Yūsai, who was away from Tanabe visiting the capital when Michikatsu made his momentous decision, saved the poems the two exchanged on this occasion.⁴³ The “mossy sleeves” that appear in the poems are those of a dark robe worn by one who has taken vows, grown mossy because he now lives in the shadows. The other image, that of a heart deeply imbued—literally, dyed with—*murasaki* (purple), refers to Michikatsu's knowledge of *The Tale of Genji* by “Murasaki Shikibu.”

A poem received from the Nakanoin Middle Counselor, Lord Michikatsu, upon his taking vows:

<i>murasaki ni</i>	Before this heart, so
<i>someshi kokoro mo</i>	deeply imbued with Murasaki,
<i>tachihatenu</i>	beats its last,
<i>sode no yukue o</i>	I consign these sleeves to the
<i>koke ni makasete</i>	fate of those of mossy hue.

In reply [Yūsai sent]:

<i>murasaki ni</i>	An end to that heart
<i>someshi kokoro no</i>	deeply imbued with Murasaki:
<i>hate mo ushi</i>	how dismal,
<i>omowanu sode o</i>	and unexpected those sleeves
<i>koke ni yatsushite</i>	reduced to a mossy hue.

Yūsai also recorded the response of their friend Satomura Jōha, the renowned master of linked verse whom we have already met in the company of Hideyoshi:

<i>koke ni nasu</i>	Awesomely worthy
<i>sode zo kashikoki</i>	of respect, those sleeves rendered
	mossy;

<i>yuzurioku</i>	and profound
<i>kokoro wa fukaki</i>	the heart, dyed Murasaki,
<i>murasaki no iro</i>	that foregoes its due rewards.

Taking vows as a lay monk meant adopting a new name. Michikatsu chose the religious name Sonen (“simplicity”) and the literary style Yasokuken (“one who has sufficient”). Often shortened to Yasoku, Michikatsu’s style was taken from the title of a poem (“On the hall he named “That Should Suffice”) by the Song period scholar-official Huang Tingjian—a man whose own political career had been ruined by accusations of immoral conduct and periods of exile.⁴⁴ Yet whatever personal consolation renouncing worldly ambition may have afforded Michikatsu, his sacrifice went unrecognized by the new emperor. On 1586.11.7 Ōgimachi abdicated and GoYōzei ascended the throne, but Michikatsu was still not recalled to the capital.

NAKAKO

Nakanoin genealogies record four children born to Michikatsu and his Isshiki wife. The first was a son, born in the mid 1580s and known as Takamochi. At some point—most likely when he came of age in his early teens—he was granted the character “Taka” from Yūsai’s preretirement name, Fujitaka, adopted by the Hosokawa, and married to Yūsai’s daughter Sen. The provision of his firstborn son to the Hosokawa was perhaps a way for Michikatsu to repay some of the hospitality for which he was indebted and maintain a connection between the two families. Unfortunately, Takamochi died young, in his twenty-first year. Sen was remarried into the Ogasawara family of Hosokawa retainers, but her two sons by Takamochi belonged to the Hosokawa and remained with them. The elder was enfeoffed with lands valued at 3,000 *koku*; the younger, an excess male, was made a monk.⁴⁵

The second child born to Michikatsu and his Isshiki wife was also a son, born on 1588.1.26, and known after he became a courtier as Michimura (literally “Michi of the village,” perhaps a reference to his less than illustrious birth in the remote countryside?).⁴⁶ Where the father had been reckless, the son would be careful. During the long and distinguished career Michimura later made for himself at court, he

demonstrated unfailing loyalty to the emperor he served, and he did his best to live down the taint of scandal that lingered in the wake of his sister's subsequent disgrace.

That sister was Nakako, born also in Tanabe Castle about 1591. One Nakanoin genealogy lists her only as "daughter, born after Michimura," and does not provide any other information except "banished to Izu."⁴⁷ It is not that the family was especially squeamish about revealing details of their daughter's birth and subsequent life. Rather, the Confucian notion, as famously expressed in the *Book of Ceremonial*, that "women have no business outside the home, therefore their names are not known by outsiders,"⁴⁸ seems to have been taken just as seriously in Japan as it was in China, with the result that standard sources such as genealogies simply do not record information about women. There is no mention—even in recently compiled genealogies—of Lady Nijō, the most (in)famous woman ever born to the Nakanoin family. The daughter of thirteenth-century courtier Nakanoin Masatada, she was an imperial concubine whose extraordinary memoir *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* was only discovered in the Imperial Archives in 1940. The principal purpose of genealogies is not comprehensiveness, but rather the selective recording of significant dates in the lives of successive male heads of families. In the case of aristocratic males, this means their birth and death dates; the dates of their promotions in court rank and appointments to court offices; and in a literary family such as the Nakanoin, the date a house head received esoteric teachings concerning the interpretation of important literary texts. The case of the higher-ranked Konoe family is similar: genealogies list three daughters born to mid sixteenth-century house head Taneie, for example; but, typically, neither their mothers nor their dates of birth or death are recorded.⁴⁹ In the next generation, that of Sakihisa, the one Konoe daughter we know something about is Sakiko, because she was adopted by an important man (Hideyoshi); married to an important man (Emperor GoYōzei); and gave birth to an important man (Emperor GoMizuno'ō). Nakako's date of birth is only approximate, therefore, because it is not given in any Nakanoin genealogy and must be back calculated from her supposed age—about eighty—in two different temple records of her death on 1671.6.27.⁵⁰

Michikatsu and his wife had a fourth child, another son, on 1603.9.28.⁵¹ He was adopted into a Nakanoin branch family, the Kitabatake, and, as Kitabatake Chikaaki, became the head of that house. Like his elder brother

Takamochi, however, he did not live long but died in 1630 in his twenty-eighth year.



What would Nakako's early childhood have been like? At its most fundamental level, what would she have eaten every day, what would she have worn, who would have educated her and her elder brothers? Doubtless the family's staple food consisted of grains such as barley, brown rice, and millet. They would also have eaten a variety of vegetables—ferns, pulses, and roots—simmered or pickled, as well as cooked seaweeds. Protein in the traditional Japanese diet was supplied by tofu and other soybean products, and in Tanabe there would have been fresh fish from the sea, whereas in landlocked Kyoto all but river fish had to be preserved in either salt or vinegar before transport there. Fruits eaten in premodern Japan included loquats, which ripen in early summer; akebia, which ripen in early autumn; and persimmons, which cling to the tree through early winter and can also be dried and stored.

Ordinary people wore clothes woven from flax, the flaxlike fiber ramie, and increasingly cotton. "Cathay cotton" (*kara momen*), as the imported fabric was known, had been worn only by the well-off until the crop became widespread in Japan over the course of the sixteenth century. Thereafter, cotton was adopted by all social classes for clothing and bedding: it was comfortable, durable, and washable.⁵² Michikatsu perhaps managed to keep some of his silk court robes, at least for a while, but it seems unlikely that other members of his family would have been clothed in silk, at least while they remained in Tanabe. In the winter, they wore jackets padded with cotton wadding or silk floss to keep (minimally) warm.

The family's living quarters are clearly shown on a contemporary plan of the castle, designated as "Yasoku's turret."⁵³ The structure rises from the south-facing wall of a U-shaped projection in the eastern ramparts of the castle. Immediately below it flows the outer moat. Beyond the moat a level plain planted with rice stretches all the way to the mountains. The dimensions of the structure are not given, but Tanabe was a small castle, and its turrets commensurately small. None of the surviving plans is sufficiently detailed to show interior spaces, but it is unlikely there were any permanent inner walls. This was a space designed for fighting, not domestic habitation. The Nakanoin would have lived at close quarters in Tanabe.

And from time to time Nakako would have been in the same room with Yūsai and his wife. She was, after all, their granddaughter, through her mother, whom Yūsai had adopted.

Nakako would likely have been brought up according to aristocratic standards, not by the very different, though more stringent, warrior code of conduct. Samurai women were much more physically active than noblewomen: they were taught to ride horses and use weapons, particularly the *naginata* or halberd, a broad sword blade fixed to the end of a long wooden haft that served to keep its wielder at a safe distance from her attacker. Noblewomen did not ride horses; they walked or, if very high-ranking, rode in ox-drawn carriages or were carried in palanquins by bearers. Nor did they learn to use weapons, though soon after birth, noble boys and girls were presented with a sword by their father, symbolizing his acknowledgment of the child as his own. Nakako was presented with a sword by her father, and we know that she kept it with her until 1623. Michikatsu's later poetry reveals a profound love for his daughter, and we may imagine that he devoted considerable time and energy to educating her, as well as her brothers, preparing them to take their places in court society, should they be fortunate enough to return to the capital. Noble girls were taught to read and write and compose poetry in Japanese. And as we shall see, the evidence suggests Michikatsu even taught Nakako to read *The Tale of Genji*. Visiting Europeans were astounded by the prevalence of literate women in Japan. Luís Fróis observed in his *Treatise* of 1585 that Japanese women "consider it humiliating not to know how to write, [while] among us, literate women are not so prevalent."⁵⁴ Some noblewomen also learned to paint, in the black ink-on-paper style known as *hakubyō*, literally "white sketches," after the plain white backgrounds that were not filled in with color; and to play music, especially the koto and the lutelike *biwa*. Instruments that required the player to blow into them were taboo for aristocratic women. We do not know to what extent Nakako's mother was literate—except for the description of her lineage and her later posthumous designation, there is nothing further about her and certainly nothing by her in the Nakanoin archive. But we are safe in assuming that it would have been she who taught her daughter to sew. Women of all social classes in premodern Japan sewed garments, for themselves, their menfolk, and their children. Bolts of cloth were bestowed as gifts and as payment for services rendered; their standard width made the cutting out and piecing together of kimono a skill that was easily mastered.

Her father, Michikatsu, would have been the only aristocrat Nakako knew in the first eight years of her life. Other influences would have been far more powerful. From the slits (one hesitates to call them windows) in the walls of their turret, she would have seen farmers at work in their fields and laborers from the castle town. She would not have been one of those sheltered princesses who had to be shown dolls so she would know what ordinary people looked like.⁵⁵ Surely too the family found time to make excursions to the seashore and the mountains, where they would have seen a great deal more of country life in the raw than whatever urbanity Michikatsu brought to Tanabe. We may suppose that these early years in the remote countryside provided Nakako with the reserves of physical strength and resourcefulness she would draw on later in her eventful life.

MICHIKATSU'S GREAT WORK

In 1589, when Michikatsu had been living at Tanabe Castle for some eight years, Yūsai suggested that his guest should compile a commentary on *The Tale of Genji*. Yūsai himself had studied *Genji* with Michikatsu's uncle Sanjōnishi Saneki, but his curiosity had not been satisfied. He had sought out copies of the earlier commentaries, but there were so many of them and they were so difficult to consult; he wanted Michikatsu to prepare a new one.⁵⁶ And he made it possible for his guest to do so by providing him with copies of the texts he would need to consult, as well as, we must assume, the (expensive) paper, the ink, and the uninterrupted time he would need to complete the task. Michikatsu agreed to Yūsai's suggestion and began work.

The first edition of *The Tale of Genji* was compiled during the winter of 1008. For the next six hundred years, *Genji* would be copied and expanded, edited and circulated, all in manuscript. It was only in the early seventeenth century that a complete text was printed for the first time.⁵⁷ Printing transformed *Genji* into the truly popular work it remains today. But until the seventeenth century, *Genji* was an aristocratic text: its principal manuscripts were the property of aristocrats, and aristocrats were its preeminent interpreters.

An ability to understand *Genji* and make allusions to it became *de rigueur* after the courtier-poet Fujiwara no Shunzei's famous declaration, at a poetry contest held in 1193, that "to compose poetry without having read

Genji is deplorable.”⁵⁸ It is impossible to overstate the importance of this moment in the history of the way *Genji* was read. As one critic describes the consequences:

Japanese poetry was the premier genre of all the arts practiced in Japan, rivaled only by the composition of Chinese-style poetry. When it became permissible to draw the diction and conception of poems from *Genji*, to allude to scenes and events in *Genji* in poetry; when the many poems “composed” by characters in the *Genji* were themselves admitted into the canon of Japanese poetry; the way then opened for all the other forms of attention normally reserved for the classics to be applied to *Genji*—the collation, recension, and verification of texts, the compilation of commentaries, the construction of genealogies, the rendition of pivotal scenes in paintings.⁵⁹

By the late sixteenth century, when Michikatsu began work, this accumulation of scholarship, lore, and the products of its application had grown so vast that it could only be mastered by those willing and able to devote their entire lives to the study of *Genji*. And this is precisely what Yūsai suggested Michikatsu do.

Michikatsu was exceptionally well qualified to fulfill Yūsai's commission. His mother was a Sanjōnishi, a family that had been distinguished for more than a century for scholarship of Japanese literature. Michikatsu's great-grandfather Sanetaka was the highly regarded compiler of two influential commentaries on *Genji*, *Delighting in Flowers* and *Brooklet of Commentary*, and his descendants banded together to protect the family patrimony, building on the achievements of their great predecessor.⁶⁰ Thus the “accretive” nature of their scholarship, one example of which must suffice: the Sanjōnishi family's response to a 1533.2 commission from the military governor of Noto was to prepare a commentary based on Sanetaka's *Brooklet of Commentary*, supplemented by son Kin'eda's lecture notes. With further additions, this text evolved into Kin'eda's own *Starlight Commentary*.⁶¹ The descendants of Sanetaka formed a school of classical scholarship that came to be known as the Sanjōnishi lineage; they were recognized as leaders in the study of *The Tale of Genji*, and Michikatsu was one of them.

His commentary was a decade in the making. During these ten years, Michikatsu made occasional unofficial trips to the capital, to attend

poetry parties and to copy manuscripts he needed to consult.⁶² But most of the time he spent in Tanabe, where things could be surprisingly lively. The death of several noted court poets in the mid 1590s, including Michikatsu's cousin Kujō Tanemichi, left Yūsai and the linked-verse master Jōha—neither of them noblemen—as the two most eminent poets in the land. Yūsai especially seems to have attracted disciples from far and wide. The warrior and poet Kinoshita Chōshōshi, lord of Obama Castle in the neighboring province of Wakasa, recalls the day he stumbled upon one of Yūsai's poetry parties in full swing: "Once when I presented myself in Tango to pay my respects, Lord Yūsai was hosting a poetry gathering. There were more than forty people in attendance—all of them old stalwarts of the [Ashikaga] shogunal house and ronin of illustrious lineage."⁶³

The "old stalwarts" and "ronin" in attendance suggest that Yūsai provided a haven for those who were down on their luck, and that Michikatsu was not the only beneficiary of his largesse. When in 1596.4 one of those Yūsai had taken in died, Michikatsu recalled: "While I was living in retirement within the walls of Yūsai's castle in the countryside at Tanabe, there was an old man who also had a hermitage in the same precinct. Since I lived right next door, he became my constant companion in poetry and in sake."⁶⁴

In 1598, on 6.19, Michikatsu finally finished his new commentary on *Genji*. It was entitled *Mingō nisso*, literally *The River Min Enters Chu*, a reference to the Min River in western China (present-day Sichuan Province) that flowed into the great Yangtze River in Chu, an ancient kingdom of the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.). Michikatsu explained the choice of title in his preface:

As Master Shangu wrote in his poem, "the River Min at its origins is but a trickle on which to float a saké cup, yet when it enters Chu its depths are fathomless." Might we not liken the [early commentary on *Genji*] *Endnotes* to the source of the River Min? And the reason this river of commentary is as deep as the Min where it enters Chu is that down through the ages scholars have been determined to annotate, not omitting the slightest nuance of human emotion, nor the smallest detail.⁶⁵

"Shangu" is the literary style of Huang Tingjian, the Song period scholar-official from whose poetry Michikatsu had earlier taken his own literary

style, Yasokuken. Here too, in the conceit he borrows to describe the origins of his great endeavor (a stream shallow enough to float saké cups), is a brief glimpse of the intellectual heritage to which Michikatsu belonged: it can be traced from Huang Tingjian's poem via the third-century B.C. philosopher Xun Zi all the way back to Confucius.

The River Min Enters Chu is a massive compilation, a veritable “monument of medieval scholarship on the novel” that runs to almost 3,000 pages in a modern printed edition.⁶⁶ From the moment it was completed until well into the twentieth century, it was the principal source for medieval and especially Sanjōnishi school commentaries on *Genji*, and manuscript copies abound. It was also a major source for the annotations in the most widely read early modern edition of *Genji*, Kitamura Kigin's 1673 *Moon Over the Lake Commentary*.⁶⁷

Yūsai, who had been there at the beginning and throughout the decade it had taken to produce it, was also there at the end, gracing Michikatsu's work with an afterword in which he states that it was he who chose the complimentary title for the commentary. Yūsai also presented the author with a celebratory *hokku*—the opening verse in a sequence of linked verse:

kōritemo

nagare soko naki

*irie kana*⁶⁸

Even when frozen,

this river's depths yet flow here

where it meets the sea.

“This river's depths” refers of course to Michikatsu's commentary, flowing into the large “sea” (more properly the Yangtze) of *Genji* commentary. By “frozen,” Yūsai perhaps means to suggest Michikatsu's interrupted court career, and to praise him for continuing to push forward despite his long exile.

FAREWELL TO TANABE CASTLE

The very next year, Michikatsu was pardoned. Emperor GoYōzei could no longer ignore the man who was Yūsai's most outstanding poetic disciple, and moreover one who had so recently demonstrated that he was, beyond a doubt, the country's most erudite scholar of *The Tale of Genji*. GoYōzei was determined to restore the literary fortunes of the court and the cultural authority of the throne. To do this, he needed Michikatsu in Kyoto.⁶⁹

As Michikatsu prepared to leave Tanabe Castle, he and Yūsai exchanged farewell poems. Yūsai's prefatory note explains:

Yasokuken Sonen had come under imperial censure and spent several years in Tango. Now he was summoned back by imperial command, and when Grand Counselor Kanshūji sent word of this, just before he was to return to the capital [I wrote]:

<i>wasuru na yo</i>	Forget not the crane
<i>tsubasa narabeshi</i>	you once flew with wing to wing,
<i>tomotsuru no</i>	your companion,
<i>hitori kumoi ni</i>	though you return alone
<i>tachikaerutomo</i>	to that dwelling above the clouds.

Yūsai's poem contains a nicely turned allusion to a scene in *The Tale of Genji*: the hero, banished from court for an affair with an imperial concubine, is visited by his best friend, Tō no Chūjō. As he prepares to return to the capital, leaving Genji behind, he says:

<i>tazu ga naki</i>	Forlorn in the clouds,
<i>kumoi ni hitori</i>	I lift in my solitude
<i>ne o zo naku</i>	cries of loneliness,
<i>tsubasa narabeshi</i>	longing for that old, old friend
<i>tomo o koitsutsu</i>	I once flew with wing to wing. ⁷⁰

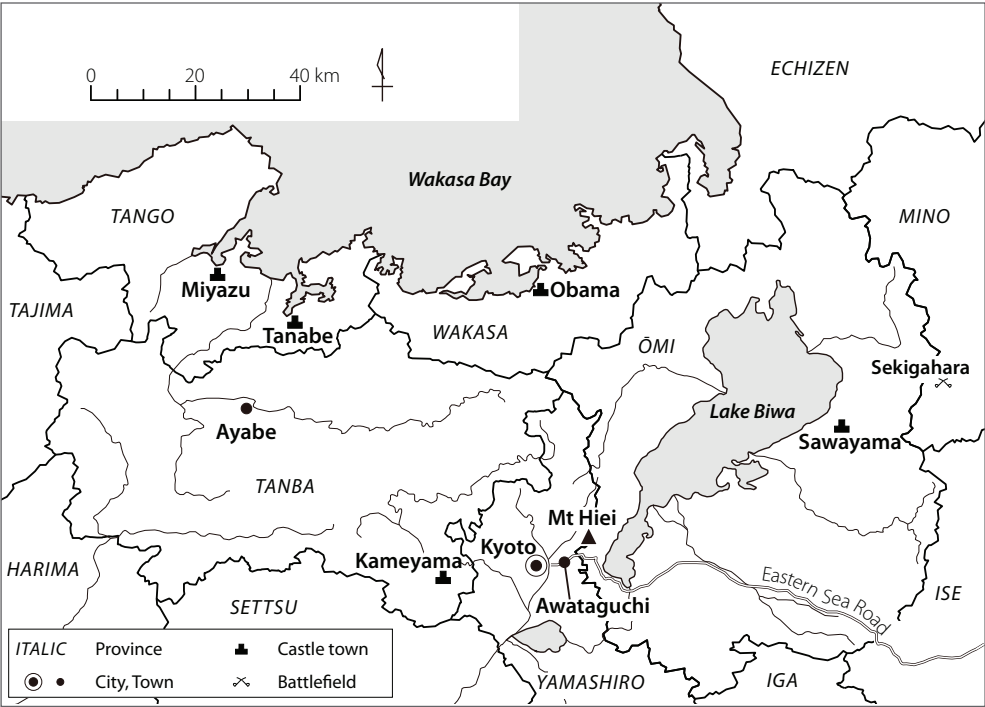
Michikatsu's response to Yūsai was reassuring:

<i>kaerubeki</i>	As I make my way
<i>kumoi ni tadoru</i>	to that dwelling above the clouds
<i>tomotsuru no</i>	whither I return,
<i>moto no sawabe o</i>	never shall I desert the marsh
<i>tachi wa hanareji</i> ⁷¹	of the crane I leave behind.

A story told in Maizuru also illustrates the close bond the two men had forged over the nineteen years they had lived and worked together. Yūsai and Michikatsu were occasionally rowed out to an island in the bay that became known as "Growing Older Island" (Toshitoru Shima), so local lore has it, when one New Year's Eve the two so lost themselves in toasts and

conversation that it was only when temple bells rang in the New Year that they realized how late—or how early—it was. Since people's ages were calculated by the number of years in which they had lived, not by the number of years elapsed since birth, everyone was automatically one year older at the New Year; that meant Yūsai and Michikatsu had grown a year older in the course of their long evening on the island.⁷²

Tanabe is 25 *ri* or about 60 miles from Kyoto. There is no direct route: to get there one must first travel west to Kameyama (present-day Kameoka), then northwest to Ayabe, then head off northeast in the direction of Tanabe. At a brisk pace of 10 *ri*, about 25 miles, per day, a man might possibly walk the return journey from Tanabe to the capital in two and a half days. With changes of horse, the distance could be covered by a competent rider in a single day. But with women, children, and baggage, it is difficult to imagine the journey taking less than a week. Michikatsu, his wife, and their two children—Michimura, eleven years old in 1599, and Nakako, about eight—set off for the capital that three of them had never seen before. Michikatsu surely had no idea how soon he would be back in Tanabe.



Central Japan in 1600

Chapter 2

THE YEAR 1600

A World Again at War

chirinubeki

toki shirete koso

yo no naka no

hana mo hana nare

*hito mo hito nare*¹

Because they know when

their time to perish is come,

in this world of ours

blossoms fall as blossoms will

and people as people will.

—AKECHI TAMA GRACIA, 1600.7.17

Pardoned and home again in the capital, Michikatsu made his first appearance before the emperor on 1599.12.7. Just as nineteen years earlier the women of the Bureau of Palace Attendants had reported his misdeed and punishment, so today they described his return in the *Daily Records*:

The Nakanojin former [Middle Counselor], though previously subject to imperial censure, was now cleared of this opprobrium. Today he waited upon His Majesty to express his gratitude. He was honored, he said, and he offered an impromptu poem. For at the imperial repast, His Majesty had composed a Chinese-style poem.²

Michikatsu's exchange of poems with GoYōzei is preserved in his personal poetry collection.³ The emperor presented him with a seven-character quatrain:

The wild goose returns southward, leaving behind twelfth-month
skies.

This evening we talk of old times, think delightful thoughts.

Was not your previous state like that of Su Wu, who departed and then
returned?

As in an instant has passed a span of nineteen years.

GoYōzei compares Michikatsu to the Han dynasty courtier Su Wu, who in 100 B.C. was sent as an envoy to the Xiongnu, a nomadic people that inhabited the steppes of northern Asia and were long-term adversaries of the Chinese. Held prisoner by the Xiongnu for nineteen years, Su Wu behaved with exemplary loyalty. Legend has it that he managed to send a message back to the Han court informing them he was still alive; this he did by attaching his missive to the leg of a migrating wild goose. The coincidence of Su Wu's nineteen-year absence from court provides GoYōzei the opportunity to compare the two men, and the comparison is flattering to Michikatsu, who was in Tango not as a faithful servant of the court like Su Wu, but because he had been censured by a peevish former emperor. Michikatsu replied with a Japanese poem:

*omoiki ya
kari no yukiki ni
shitaikoshi
kumoi ni kaeru
mi o kotoshi to wa*

Would I ever have thought it—
that this should be the year
the wild goose might
return to the dwelling
he so longed for above the clouds?

Michikatsu does not refer to himself in complimentary terms, of course: in his poem, he is not the loyal courtier Su Wu, merely the returning wild goose. There is a certain inaptness about this metaphor, for it was the courtier who was away for nineteen years, not the goose; geese are migratory and return every year to their “dwelling above the clouds.” One senses the two men doing the best they can with the poetic resources at their disposal. They cannot have been close before Michikatsu was censured, for in 1580 GoYōzei was only eight years old. It was GoYōzei's father, Prince Sanehito, whom Michikatsu had served. The emperor was now twenty-eight, and Michikatsu forty-three. They did not have much in the way of “old times” to talk about.

RETURN TO THE WORLD

The year 1600 began quietly enough, with a succession of celebratory poetry parties at the palace and the homes of various courtiers, Michikatsu's included. Yūsai too was in Kyoto, and his friend managed to borrow a number of manuscripts from the imperial and the Konoe family collections for him to copy. Both men worked hard guiding the younger generation of courtiers. Michikatsu's son and heir, Michimura, now in his thirteenth year, was awarded court rank for the first time on 1600.5.10 and began to attend court functions as a chamberlain. Michikatsu had another protégé in Sanjōnishi Sane'eda. The continuing prestige of the Sanjōnishi house was endangered when the head of the house, Kinkuni (Sane'eki's son and Sane'eda's father) died in 1587, aged only thirty-one, leaving behind an heir who was too young to have imbibed the family literary patrimony. Yūsai and Michikatsu took charge of the young man's education. In 1594, when Sane'eda was nineteen years old, he spent five months at Tanabe Castle studying poetic composition and the classics intensively with the two older men. In 1596 he recorded the answers Michikatsu provided to a series of questions: memoranda include how to compose poetry, how to approach assigned topics ("distant view of dusk: be sure to keep the entire day in mind"), and notes on classical vocabulary.⁴ Even after Michikatsu's return to the capital, Sane'eda continued to submit his compositions to him for correction.

In the sixth month, Michikatsu lectured on *The Tale of Genji* in the presence of GoYōzei and one of his younger brothers, the Prince-Abbot of the Daikakuji; such lectures would become a regular feature of his life over the next decade. Indeed, if the record of his activities following his return to the capital may be reckoned a guide to his subjective state, it would appear that he threw himself into a busy round of literary and scholarly pursuits with enthusiasm: he copied and edited texts for the imperial and the Nakanoin house collections, for Toyotomi Hideyori and Tokugawa Ieyasu, and for wealthy commoners as well. The best known of these are his editions of *Tales of Ise* and *Shōmonshō*, a commentary on *Ise* by his distant forebear, the excess-Nakanoin-male-made-monk Shōhaku, both of which he prepared for the merchant Suminokura Sōan and which were printed using wooden movable type in Saga, Kyoto, in 1608 and 1609 respectively.⁵

Yūsai had spent much of his life in the company of courtiers, yet was not one of them. The events of 1600 would reveal him ready to demonstrate his warrior's mettle one last time. Toward the end of the fifth month he left the capital and returned to Tanabe Castle. Hideyoshi had been dead for almost two years; the battle to determine who would rule Japan in his place was looming.

On one side were a number of powerful daimyo from western Japan who were loyal to Hideyoshi's young son Hideyori, still only seven years old; on the other were daimyo from eastern Japan who had thrown in their lot with Tokugawa Ieyasu. The Hosokawa were firmly on the Tokugawa side. When on 6.16 Ieyasu left Osaka to move north against the Uesugi clan in their fief of Aizu-Wakamatsu, Yūsai's son Tadaoki was close behind, setting out from his castle in Miyazu on 6.27. It was then that Ishida Mitsunari, leader of the western daimyo, saw his chance. Conferring with his allies, he concluded that among the several daimyo who had accompanied Ieyasu, Tadaoki might be persuaded to change his allegiance—if his wife were to be taken from the Hosokawa mansion and held hostage in Osaka Castle while an army was sent against Yūsai. If he did not, then the Hosokawa castles in Tango could be stormed and their province taken over in his absence.⁶

Mitsunari summoned Mitoya Takakazu, a former vassal of one of his chief allies, Mōri Terumoto, and offered to reward him munificently if he would lead the point force through the mountains to Tanabe Castle. Mitoya agreed to do so—but came to see his advantage differently and, determined to be on the side of Ieyasu, declared his allegiance by absconding to Tanabe with ten of his own men. He arrived on 7.15, told Yūsai what was afoot, and volunteered to join him in defending the castle.⁷

GRACIA

By 1600, Tadaoki's wife, Tama, was thirty-seven years old and the mother of at least five children: three sons and two or possibly three daughters.⁸ She had been living at the Hosokawa mansion in Osaka on and off for sixteen years, ever since Hideyoshi had allowed her to emerge from hiding in 1584. (Her two younger children were born in Miyazu Castle, so we know that she returned there from time to time.) In 1587, she had converted to Christianity and taken the baptismal name Gracia.

Christian missionaries first arrived in Japan in 1549, when Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus stepped ashore at Kagoshima in southern Kyushu. The ensuing century, through 1650, by which time missionaries and converts alike had been expelled, martyred, or forced to apostatize, is Japan's so-called "Christian century." At the peak of the new religion's popularity in the late sixteenth century, the missionaries could boast of some 300,000 Japanese converts to Catholicism.⁹ Black-garbed padres became a familiar sight in the major cities, a number of blind itinerant singers gave up their traditional stories and instead began to recite Japanese renditions of the lives of the saints,¹⁰ and paintings on folding screens reveal that wearing crucifixes was all the rage.

Gracia was a serious student of Christianity. Although her movements were closely monitored—she attended a church service only once in her life, on Easter Sunday in 1587—she was able to communicate with the Jesuits via her gentlewomen, especially Kiyohara Ito, baptized Maria.¹¹ According to the account of Gracia given by Luís Fróis in his *História de Japão*, it was at her request that the padres first sent her "some of our spiritual books." One was a copy of *Contemptus mundi*, Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, written in Latin about 1418.

She savored it so much [Fróis wrote], that she never left it far from her. If questions came to her mind about some words in our language [Latin or Portuguese] or if she did not know some maxims, she would write them all down clearly and send Maria to the church to bring her back the solutions. . . . On Sundays and holy days, she gathered her Christian women to her and she herself read some chapters of *Contemptus mundi*, or she exercised some items of catechism having translated them.¹²

Confined at home and surrounded by her gentlewomen, Gracia had a yearning for intellectual stimulation that is starkly apparent. In 1587, when she began her study of Christian doctrine, the Jesuits' Japanese translation of *Contemptus mundi* was not yet complete. In any case, surviving editions printed in Japan show that many sentences were left in Latin or in Portuguese, so it seems safe to conclude that both Gracia and Maria eventually taught themselves sufficient Portuguese and Latin to make their way through the text and to teach it to others.¹³

Despite her religious zeal, Gracia remained a samurai woman to the end, fierce and fearless in equal measure. One story recorded in the

Hosokawa house history shows her complete refusal to be cowed by her husband, Tadaoki, a notoriously violent man even by the standards of the age.

While they were quarrelling, a male servant entered the room to see what was up. Tadaoki became jealous of the servant's glance at Tama and slaughtered him on the spot. He then wiped the bloody blade with Tama's kimono sleeve. Unperturbed, Tama continued to wear the same blood-stained kimono for the following four days. Finally Tadaoki apologized for his savage behavior and begged Tama to change into new clothes. She responded by quoting the saying, "When the husband is an ogre, it is fitting that his wife be as obstinate as a snake."¹⁴

On 1600.7.17, after five days of fruitless negotiations with Gracia and members of her household, Mitsunari's forces surrounded the Hosokawa mansion and attempted to force her to move to Osaka Castle.¹⁵ Gracia was ready. Her husband, who had inherited all his father's political astuteness and well knew the savagery men were capable of, was also prepared for any eventuality. The following account of what happened in Osaka that day was written down by the Jesuit Father Fernão Guerreiro soon afterward and is given here in Boxer's translation from the original Portuguese.

[Tadaoki] was always accustomed, when leaving his house, to give order to [the senior family steward, Ogasawara Shōsai Hidekiyo] and to his other retainers whom he left on guard that if in his absence something should happen which would place the honour of his wife in jeopardy, they should first kill her, as is the custom in Japan, and then all slit their own bellies and die together with her. On this occasion he left an identical order with this retainer. Wherefore, when the regents [Mitsunari et al.] sent an order to [Tadaoki]'s mansion, on the same day as hostilities began, saying to those who were left on guard there that they should forthwith hand over Gracia, the wife of their Lord, as a hostage for the future behaviour of her husband, it was answered that she would not be given up. As the servants realised that [Mitsunari's forces] would speedily surround the house and lay hold of their mistress, they determined for her honour's sake to carry out their Lord's command. They therefore went in all haste to tell Dona Gracia of what was toward, who ordered them to do as they

were told. She forthwith entered her oratory, which she always had very well ordered and decorated; and after ordering the candles to be lit, she knelt in prayer, preparing herself for death. After a little while she sallied forth from the oratory very courageously, and calling all her servants and [gentlewomen], ordered them to leave, saying that she only wished to die since her husband had ordered it so. The servants hesitated to leave, saying that they wished to die with her, because in addition to its being the pride and custom amongst the Japanese for the servants to die with their masters in such cases, Dona Gracia was so loved by her servants that they all wished to accompany her in death. Withal, enforced by her orders, they were compelled to withdraw outside.

Meanwhile the major-domo, [Ogasawara], together with some other servants, had strewed gunpowder in all the rooms; when the women servants had left, Dona Gracia knelt down, and repeating many times the most holy names of JESUS and MARIA, she with her own hands bared her neck, when her head was cut off at one blow. They forthwith covered her body with some silk vestments, and throwing more gunpowder on these they went into the main hall, since it would have been discourteous for them to presume to die in the same room as their mistress. Then they all ripped up their bellies, at the same time setting fire to the powder, on [the explosion of] which they and the mansion, which was very fine and beautifully furnished, were reduced to ashes. Nothing escaped therefrom save the women whom Dona Gracia had sent outside, and these, all weeping, went to [the Italian Jesuit] Father Organtino and told him what had passed; at which news the Father and all the rest of us were exceedingly sorrowful, since the Christendom of those parts had lost such a Lady, such a mirror, such and so rare an example of virtue, as she always was ever since her conversion.¹⁶

Among the many fascinations of this account of Gracia's death is the evidence it provides of how similar Christian and Japanese notions of feminine self-sacrifice were. "Exceedingly sorrowful" the Jesuits surely were to lose such a wellborn convert, sincere believer, and generous benefactor of their church; but the note of admiration for her willing self-sacrifice that creeps into the Jesuit account is unmistakable. Guerreiro is wrong to say that it was "the custom in Japan" for women to be killed rather than risk dishonor; the custom of "death before dishonor" was only practiced by the samurai class—at no time more than 10 percent of the population¹⁷—and

then not unfailingly: examples of women “reused” by their families to forge new political alliances after the demise of a first husband are legion. Moreover, both samurai men and women might prefer to kill themselves in situations where capture, humiliation, and/or death were inevitable. In a practice known properly as *seppuku*, men cut open their bellies, immediately after which they were beheaded by a *kaishaku* or assistant. Women did not commit *seppuku*. Instead, a woman knelt on the floor, bound her legs together so as not to demean herself by falling into a graceless position as she died, and then slit her jugular vein. For Gracia—and her husband and his retainers—the problem was that as a Christian she could not lawfully take her own life; she would have to be killed by someone else. And for this possibility, she was perfectly prepared. Over the last few days of her life, she was in constant touch with her Jesuit confessors, who recalled her as “at peace in her soul. Thus she died in manly and invincible spirit. She was much submitted to the will of Our Lord, accepting such death as from the divine hand and in satisfaction for her sins.”¹⁸ Her death poem is the epigraph to this chapter.

Gracia’s disciplined acceptance of the rules of her class enabled her to defy her husband’s enemies and forced them to abandon their attempt to seize as hostages other wives and children of Ieyasu’s allies. She also managed to save her children: although her two elder sons had accompanied their father into battle and her youngest son had been sent to Edo as a hostage at the beginning of the year, her daughters and her daughter-in-law were spirited away by Gracia’s gentlewomen when they left the Hosokawa mansion on her orders.¹⁹

Furious at the failure of his plan, Mitsunari ordered his men to go ahead with the attack on Yūsai in Tanabe. But word of Gracia’s death reached Tango first, brought by a courier from Osaka the very next day. Yūsai’s reaction was swift: he razed the surrounding fortresses, and he called all the samurai families—men, women, and children—to gather in the castle at Tanabe. Likewise the bowyers and fletchers of the region, who would be needed to replenish the arsenal of the archers. All weapons, ammunition, and gunpowder were brought to Tanabe.²⁰ Then, to strengthen his meager force further, Yūsai sent his vassals out into the nearby villages to appeal for help: anyone willing to come to the castle and aid in its defense would be generously rewarded. This was not as desperate a move as it might seem. In an age of constant warfare, there were still many ronin, as well

as farmers who had once served as foot soldiers, scattered about the countryside.

Yūsai's call to arms had mixed results. Some vassals in outlying forts simply gathered up their families and anything valuable they could lay their hands on and fled. But others did come in to offer their services. Yūsai was deeply touched, and ordered his warden at Tanabe to question each of them as to their expertise and experience, and issue them muskets, bows, or lances as seemed appropriate. In the end, Yūsai's forced totaled no more than 50 samurai and 500 men at arms. But all of them were there of their own free will. No less crucial to a castle about to be besieged were the efforts of a ronin named Kanayama, who in the dark of night, with a team of 50 villagers, managed to transport some 50 *koku* of rice, about 250 bushels, into the castle without being observed.²¹ Thereafter, the fields in the immediate vicinity of the castle were burned. At this point it remained only to shift to full battle footing with proper ceremony. Yūsai mustered his men and appeared before them in full armor, his helmet bristling with two tall hoe-shaped projections, his long sword strapped to his waist, and a gold-tasseled baton of command in his hand. A triple toast to victory was drunk, the celebratory chant "Sanbasō" was sung, and finally Yūsai led the entire force in a rousing battle cry known as the "Whale Wave." "Eii! Eii!" he shouted, in response to which rose a thunderous "Wo-o-o-oh!" Then the same once more; and once more again. The defenders of Tanabe Castle were now as ready for their enemy as ever they would be.²²

THE SIEGE OF TANABE CASTLE

On 7.20 the attacking force, under the command of Onogi Kimisato, a veteran of the brutal Korean campaigns, crossed the border into Tango. By the next day Tanabe Castle was surrounded. Onogi's army is estimated to have been some 15,000 strong, while Yūsai had to make do with only 500-and-some defenders. Heavy fighting ensued through the twenty-fifth. There was a great deal of musket fire, with the besieged forces sallying forth to do battle with Onogi's force and the attackers making numerous attempts to breach the castle's ramparts, accompanied by much shouting and blowing on conch horns. Eventually Yūsai commanded his men to desist from leaving the cover of the castle, so as to maintain the strength

of his defenses and waste no more lives. He was also forced to torch the quarter of the castle town that lay on the near side of the Takano River, to clear fields of fire and deny cover to the enemy. In this way, and despite the disparity in numbers, by 7.26 a stalemate had been reached and fighting died down: Yūsai could not fight his way out, but his defenses were too tight for Onogi to force his way in. It appeared that the siege would be long and drawn out.

The stalemate allowed the besieging army to re-equip. They moved in two batteries of large cannon that fired missiles weighing 300 *monme*, approximately two and a half pounds. The western battery, positioned on the ashes of the razed castle town, succeeded in destroying a tall watchtower, and the eastern battery blew a massive hole in the outer wall of “Yasoku’s turret.” The bombardment was unnerving to those in the castle, but Yūsai showed his apparent lack of concern by composing poetry during the barrages. His wife, Numata Jakō, also played an important role throughout the siege. At night she would don her armor and make the rounds of the men on watch to buoy their spirits. She also made a diagram of the banners of those enemy units that either fired high so as not to hit anyone or fired using only powder and no musket balls. If the Hosokawa survived the siege, it would in part be because of sympathizers among the enemy force, and she wanted them spared from any post-battle retribution.²³

By this time, word of Yūsai’s plight had reached the court and was arousing concern. Yūsai was the last initiate in a prestigious lineage of esoteric teachings concerning the interpretation of the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems (Kokinshū)*.²⁴ If he were to die, those *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū* would be lost. When in 1501 Sanjōnishi Sanetaka’s initiation in the *Secret Teachings* was completed, they became part of the cultural capital of his family. The *Secret Teachings* then passed from Sanetaka to his son Kin’eda, who transmitted them to his son Saneki. Saneki’s son Kinkuni was too young at the time of his father’s death to be entrusted with the *Secret Teachings* in full; to avoid the danger of the patrimony falling into the hands of a rival aristocratic family, Saneki entrusted the task of completing his son’s initiation to his disciple Yūsai. This he duly did—but then Kinkuni died, leaving behind a son, Sane’eda, who was only thirteen years old. In 1600, Sane’eda was still only twenty-five and not yet a full initiate. Yūsai was also in the process of transmitting the teachings to Prince Toshihito, one of GoYōzei’s younger brothers, but he too was not

yet a full initiate. Besieged in his castle, Yūsai was left as sole guardian of the *Secret Teachings*. It was imperative that he be saved.²⁵

Yūsai's poetic disciple Prince Toshihito was the first to act. On 7.27, messengers from the prince arrived in Tanabe bearing a letter urging his teacher to negotiate a truce. But the aging warrior refused. Instead, he prepared a list itemizing his most valuable manuscripts, packed them up, and sent them out of the castle. To the emperor, he gave his copies of the twenty-one imperially commissioned anthologies of Japanese poetry; to Prince Toshihito, he passed on documents concerning the *Secret Teachings* and his own copy of Michikatsu's commentary, *The River Min Enters Chu*; to a young courtier and poetic protégé named Karasumaru Mitsuhiro he sent a box of books; and to the Kyoto magistrate Maeda Gen'i went a box containing the personal poetry collections of six esteemed twelfth-century poets.²⁶

The dispatch of these documents and texts occasioned two of Yūsai's most famous poems.²⁷

On Keichō 5 (1600).7.27 [he wrote], when besieged in my castle in the province of Tango, I proffered documents certifying my initiation in the *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū* to the Prince-Minister of Ceremonial Toshihito:

<i>inishie mo</i>	In the past as in
<i>ima mo kawaranu</i>	the present, unchanging is
<i>yo no naka ni</i>	this world in which
<i>kokoro no tane o</i>	the seeds of our hearts and minds
<i>nokosu koto no ha</i>	live on in the leaves of our words.

Yūsai alludes here to the kana preface to the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, perhaps the most influential treatise on literature ever composed in Japan, in which courtier Ki no Tsurayuki explains human literary activity as follows:

Japanese poetry has its seed in the human heart and flourishes in myriad leaves of words. We are creatures of many experiences, many deeds; and it is in poetry that we give expression to the meditations of our hearts in terms of what we see and hear. We hear the warbler sing among the blossoms, or the voice of the frog dwelling in the water—is there any living

creature not given to song? Effortlessly, poetry moves heaven and earth, stirs the feelings of spirits invisible to the eye, softens relations between men and women, calms the hearts of fierce warriors.²⁸

Poetry does not depend on the muses, nor is it the gift of God. It is, Tsurayuki argues, as indigenous to the human mind as singing is to birds and croaking is to frogs. Its seeds are in our hearts and minds (the two concepts are not distinguished in Japanese); its leaves are our words. Yūsai, preparing to die, parted with his most precious possessions. These—our words—will live on, he suggests in his poem; what did it matter that he might die? Or, as we might say, “*Ars longa, vita brevis.*”

To Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, Yūsai enclosed this poem with the box of books:

<i>moshiogusa</i>	Preserve these traces
<i>kakiatsumetaru</i>	that I have raked up
<i>ato tomete</i>	like seaweed along the shore;
<i>mukashi ni kaese</i>	restore them to their past
<i>waka no uranami</i>	upon the waves at Waka Bay.

“Waka Bay” is the topos of Wakanoura, south of present-day Wakayama City, its name a long-sanctioned site of poetic wordplay. Note too the familiar conceit of seaweed (read: words) raked up on the shore. To the younger man, Yūsai shows himself a little less insouciant: he implores Mitsuhiro to guard the traditions of Japanese poetry that he, Yūsai, has preserved.

Yūsai having refused the entreaties of Prince Toshihito, the court next tried an approach via the warrior’s younger half-brother Gyokuho, who was a monk at the Daitokuji. Would he be willing to go to Tanabe to remonstrate with his brother? Gyokuho replied:

Were there to be an imperial command I should hardly be able to refuse; but since this is being treated as a confidential matter, I must beg to decline. The reason is that Yūsai is old; even if he were to give up the castle, he probably would not have many more years to live. And particularly with his son Etchū-no-Kami [Tadaoki] gone to battle in the Kanto, he will be even more determined to defend the castle with undivided loyalty. Given which, one can hardly hope to remonstrate with him to give it up.²⁹

It is an interesting insight into Yūsai's character from one who presumably knew him well. He would not allow the stain of capitulation to dishonor his old age. To abandon the castle would also be to stab his son in the back. In Gyokuho's view, there could be no negotiation with such a principled man.

Undeterred, the court continued its many-pronged attempt to rescue him. An account of the battle for Tanabe Castle survives, which records the turncoat Mitoya Takakazu's version of events. Scholars believe that it was written by a close retainer after Mitoya's death in 1657, more than half a century after the events it narrates had taken place. Such an account must be used with care, and its meaning extrapolated from the local knowledge it assumes. With these caveats in mind, let us look at what Mitoya recalls happened next:

The reigning Emperor . . . was deeply touched by this and sent an imperial envoy to Osaka to say: "News of the siege of . . . Yūsai has reached the imperial ears. Although a warrior, he is the chief support of Japanese poetry and the *Secret Teachings* are in his possession. I should be most pleased if you would arrange that peace be made quickly." This greatly pleased [Kyoto magistrate] Maeda Gen'i, because he had long wished to suggest as much. He sent word to his son Maeda Shuzen-no-Kami Shigekatsu. As envoys to Tango, he sent Tominokōji [Hidenao] and Nakanoin [Michikatsu]. I understand that Nakanoin was involved because he had previously been banished to Tango when he was under imperial censure. The besieging commander, under imperial command, sent word into the castle. Yūsai agreed to meet them and had Sakata Kichiemon go to greet them at the rear gate. Sakata had previously been in the service of Prince Toshihito and was accustomed to the ways of Kyoto people.³⁰ [Yūsai] went to the reception hall. The two imperial envoys told him that the Emperor was terribly concerned that the life of the foundation stone and pillar of Japanese poetry should so unexpectedly be endangered; and that the imperial command was that he should surrender [the castle] and sue for peace.

Yūsai, in response to the Emperor, said that he was most grateful for this indication of imperial concern and that it was more than he deserved. But it was by no means his intention to surrender. If it were the imperial wish that he alone should leave the castle and commit suicide, in return for which everyone in the castle should be spared, then he could wish for

nothing better. The foolish people within the castle appeared to be delighted.

Yūsai had now refused the entreaties of the emperor in the person of two of his most trusted courtiers. There was nothing for it but for them to return to Kyoto with his uncompromising response. On 8.21, joined by a retainer of Prince Toshihito, Michikatsu and Tominokōji went to Osaka for further discussions with Maeda Gen'i.³¹

Gen'i, like Yūsai, had once been a vassal of the Oda. In 1583 Hideyoshi had entrusted him with the vital post of Kyoto magistrate and in 1585 enfeoffed him with the province of Tanba; Gen'i's son Shigekatsu was now lord of the main castle there at Kameyama. Though Gen'i was allied with the western daimyo, he and Yūsai went back a long way. Mitoya's account continues:

During the comings and goings of the imperial envoys, Maeda Gen'i was ill, but he sent an urgent letter [to Yūsai] in which he said, "It was I who said that the imperial envoys should go [to Tanabe]. The reason for this is that even though the world is now in a chaotic state, Ieyasu is bound to win out in the end. Whatever you do, go along with the imperial envoys but hold tight in the castle. Once the battle of Sekigahara is decided, the besieging force will certainly lose. Moreover, my son is in Tanba at Kameyama. You will be saved by his command."

Mitoya's mention of the "battle of Sekigahara" reveals the hindsight with which this account was written, for at that point early in the ninth month of 1600 no one knew exactly where the bloody confrontation between eastern and western forces would take place. Nonetheless, if the document is to be believed, Gen'i already saw who would emerge victorious, and he did not want Yūsai to throw his life away unnecessarily by committing suicide in exchange for the lives of the surviving defenders of Tanabe Castle. Mitoya goes on to record Yūsai's reaction to the letter:

Yūsai for a time suspected that this was an enemy plot, but [Mitoya] Takakazu, when pressed, said, "Even if it is a plot, it has long been the practice of wise commanders to change with changes in the situation. Whether it be an imperial command or a plot, first make peace, and then watch to see how things develop." [Yūsai] thought this entirely reasonable, and replied accordingly.³²

Unfortunately, Yūsai's reply to Gen'i does not seem to have survived. He did as Gen'i had suggested, however, and held tight in Tanabe Castle. He was still there in the middle of the ninth month, when the court made its final attempt to save him and the *Secret Teachings*. This time there were three imperial envoys—Sanjōnishi Sane'eda and Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, both poetic protégés of the aging warrior, and, in Tanabe yet again, his old companion, Nakako's father, Nakanoin Michikatsu. (What were his thoughts, one wonders, when he saw his family's former home blown open by cannon fire?) They bore the emperor's command that both sides cease fighting and arrange a truce. The edict read:

Yūsai Genshi is a master of both the literary and the martial arts, and as such We deem him a national teacher of the Way of the Gods and the Way of Poetry, who will serve as a tutor to Our Imperial Highness, and in particular transmit to Us the profound secrets of the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*, which have died out in the palace. If Genshi were now to lose his life, there would be no one to transmit them. The siege must be lifted with all possible haste.³³

And Yūsai finally relented. Finding it difficult to refuse the emperor a third time, on the twelfth of the ninth month he concluded a truce. Yūsai agreed to vacate Tanabe Castle, relinquishing it to Maeda Shigekatsu—not to the commander of the besieging army, Onogi—and to proceed with Shigekatsu to Kameyama Castle in the neighboring province of Tanba. The siege was finally lifted.

AFTERMATH

The battle of Sekigahara—so called because it was fought in a narrow valley west of a village of that name in the province of Mino in central Honshu—took place on 1600.9.15. It was a colossal confrontation—the western alliance could call upon about 80,000 men, the eastern about 70,000. The two sides brought their armies into position the night before, so that the battle proper could begin at daybreak. Ieyasu was at something of a disadvantage due to the failure of his son Hidetada, leading a force of Ieyasu's own vassals, to arrive in time to join the fray. The outcome was in doubt until the afternoon, when the defection of five of the western daimyo to the eastern side resulted in a convincing victory for Ieyasu's allies.

On 1600.9.27, Ieyasu arrived at Osaka Castle to pay his respects to Hideyoshi's child-heir Hideyori, on whose behalf—in name, at least—so much blood had recently been spilled. Ieyasu took over the western enceinte of the castle and granted the boy income worth 650,000 *koku* from lands in the provinces of Settsu, Kawachi, and Izumi. In effect, Ieyasu demoted Hideyori from hegemon-in-waiting to vassal, one daimyo among many others.

On 10.19, Yūsai was received in audience at Osaka Castle by Ieyasu. Japan's new military hegemon commended Yūsai for his bravery and skill in defending Tanabe Castle for so long—almost 60 days—and at such an advanced age—he was sixty-six years old. His actions had detained 15,000 enemy troops and prevented them from participating in the battle of Sekigahara. If there were any lands he desired to have, he need only name them to claim them. Yūsai steadfastly refused to accept any reward, but said that he would be grateful if Ieyasu would spare the men in the attacking force who had aided the defenders of the castle—those identified in the diagram made by his wife during the bombardments. Ieyasu is said to have been deeply impressed.³⁴

The siege had taken its toll on Yūsai nonetheless, and Prince Toshihito was sufficiently worried to send his personal physician to treat him. Eventually Yūsai recovered enough to complete transmitting the *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū* to his poetic protégés Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, Nakanoin Michikatsu, and Sanjōnishi Sane'eda, as well as Prince Toshihito. Mitsuhiro returned the box of books he had been entrusted with during the siege, and Yūsai recorded the poems the two exchanged.³⁵ Mitsuhiro wrote:

*akete minu
kai mo arikeri
tamatebako
futatabi kaeru
urashima no nami*

Rewarded I was
not to have opened up
this precious jeweled box—
once again it returns
to Urashima on the waves.

In reply [Yūsai wrote]:

*Urashima ya
hikari o soete
tamatebako*

Urashima you say?
Luster you add to
this precious jeweled box—

akete dani mizu
kaesu nami ka na

not even opening it
 but returning it on the waves.

Both poems play on the legend of Urashima Tarō, the Tango fisherman who spends three years as a guest of the Dragon King in his palace beneath the sea. There the fisherman falls in love with Princess Oto, but finally he decides to return home and receives a jeweled box from her as a parting gift. When he arrives back on dry land, he finds everything changed. In desperation, he opens the jeweled box, ignoring Princess Oto's command not to do so. White smoke wafts up and he suddenly begins to age—three hundred years have passed while he was away. Unlike Urashima Tarō, Mitsuhiro claims *not* to have opened the box Yūsai entrusted to him, and his reward is the chance to return it to its rightful owner. In Yūsai's view, the value of the box has only been enhanced by the polish of its aristocratic protector.

Ieyasu's treatment of Hideyori and his offer to Yūsai were but two small vignettes within the larger post-Sekigahara settlement. Toyotomi loyalists had been overpowered, but the Toyotomi family had survived. They would serve as a rallying point for anti-Tokugawa feeling until the final showdown between the two families in 1615.

REQUIEMS FOR GRACIA

Eventually, Tokugawa determination to regulate Japanese contact with the outside world came to encompass the extirpation of Christians and Christianity. For the time being, there were more pressing problems to deal with, and conversions to the new religion proceeded apace.

At Tadaoki's request, in the seventh month of 1601 a memorial service for the repose of Gracia's soul was celebrated in Osaka. Here is Boxer's summary of Fernão Guerreiro's original Portuguese account.

Mass was celebrated with all possible solemnity by [the Italian Jesuit] Father Organtino, and Tadaoki himself was present with over a thousand of his retainers. So great was the crowd that if he had not taken the precaution of posting guards at the end of the street leading to the church, some accident might easily have happened. A Japanese Brother preached a sermon on the text, *Beati mortui qui in domino moriuntur* (Blessed are they

who die in the Lord) and spoke at length on the certainty of after-life and of how salvation could only be obtained through the Christian Faith. At the conclusion of the sermon he delivered an eloquent panegyric on the virtues of the deceased, which so impressed Tadaoki that neither he nor his retainers could contain their tears. . . .

On his return to [his new, post-Sekigahara fief of] Buzen [in northern Kyushu] in July, 1601, Tadaoki and his retainers spoke of the memorial service at Osaka with such admiration that his daughters [Chō and Tara], who were Christians like their mother, insisted that another service should be held at [the Buzen castle-town of] Kokura in August, on the exact anniversary of Dona Gracia's death. The Fathers accordingly held a service in their house with as much splendour as their comparatively modest resources allowed, Tadaoki himself contributing liberally towards the expenses of the service and expressly stating that the money he sent them was to be expended thereon and not given to the poor as had been done in Osaka. Some other priests and brothers came over from Yamaguchi [in southern Honshu] to assist, and the house was suitably fitted up under the direction of Brother João de Torres. A special seat was prepared for Tadaoki, close to the high altar, and a part of the building was reserved for the wives of samurai. . . . Mass was celebrated, and a sermon preached by João de Torres, the whole congregation (albeit mainly heathens) following the service from start to finish with as much reverence and devotion as if they had been Christians.³⁶

Thus was Gracia's life—and death—commemorated by her family and her coreligionists. Memorial services were held each year on the anniversary of her death at least until 1611, when the Spanish Father Gregorio de Céspedes, "whome [Tadaoki] loved and esteemed very much, departed out of this life."³⁷ Eventually, the anti-Christian edicts of the Tokugawa shogunate forced Tadaoki and his son and heir, Tadatoshi, to abandon their open patronage of the Jesuits. Tadaoki himself never converted, explaining that so long as he did "not feel within him the urge to keep the sixth commandment [forbidding adultery], he will not become a Christian, since it is a shameful thing to be a Christian and not live like one."³⁸ Gracia's faith survived in her children, particularly her daughters Chō and Tara, who were never forced to apostatize. Chō died in Kokura in 1603; she had been widowed in 1595 and converted to Christianity soon after. Tara survived the Great Expulsion of 1614, when hundreds of Christians,

foreign and Japanese, ordained and lay, were forcibly deported from Nagasaki to Manila. She lived on until at least 1615 and died a Christian, although she had been married to a nonbeliever.³⁹ Perhaps the sisters were protected by the power of their natal family, which remained an important ally of the Tokugawa. Amid increasingly violent efforts to root out and destroy the potential threat to the Pax Tokugawa that Christians—with their professed loyalty to a foreign church and pope—presented, many other women died for their faith. As individuals, these women might have little impact on the emerging Tokugawa political order, but insofar as they could influence the men around them to become Christian, they were dangerous and had to be eradicated.

Chapter 3

AT THE COURT OF THE DRAGON

Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world,
and ten to one but she has the means of settling well,
without farther expense to any body.

—JANE AUSTEN, *MANSFIELD PARK*

The imperial court was yet another stage upon which the post-Sekigahara settlement was played out. First, Ieyasu ordered Kanshūji Haretoyo, elder brother of GoYōzei's mother, Hareko, to prepare a survey of court landholdings. Then in 1601 he granted extra lands to the emperor, to a number of noble families, and to the offices responsible for the support of women employed at the imperial palace.¹ Ieyasu's grants did not endow the court with great wealth; not until 1604 was the emperor's annual stipend raised to 10,000 *koku*, the bare minimum allotted a daimyo. Throughout the ensuing centuries, the Tokugawa family, its allies, and several nonallied families, such as the Shimazu of Satsuma in southern Kyushu, had vastly more resources—but Ieyasu at least put the imperial court back on a stable financial footing that allowed a comfortable standard of living. Emboldened by Ieyasu's support, GoYōzei slowly restored the regental families to something like their former prominence, appointing senior courtiers to unfilled offices and ordering them to organize ceremonies that had been held in abeyance pending sufficient funds.²

During this period of revival at court, Nakako makes her first appearance in the historical record. Early in 1601, she entered service at the

imperial palace. The *Daily Records* notes her arrival in an entry for 1601.1.19: “The young lady, daughter of the Nakanoin, entered [the palace]; she was received in the anteroom with congratulatory cups of saké and strips of kelp.”³ These few words record a major turning point in Nakako’s life. If she was indeed born in 1591, she would have been in her eleventh year when she knelt before the women who ran the Bureau of Palace Attendants, whose number she was joining. The time is about a year and a month after Michikatsu’s reprieve and the family’s return from Tango, and four months after the battle of Sekigahara. What sort of world was the girl entering? What sort of life lay before her? And how did it come about that this was to be her future? There can be no precise answers to these questions, yet we have the resources at least to attempt a reconstruction of the realm that Nakako was to inhabit for the next eight-and-a-half years. The experience would alter the rest of her life in ways that she and her parents could never have imagined.

A WORLD OF WOMEN, I

The women’s palace—sometimes rendered into English as the “rear palace,” because it was situated behind the sector of the imperial palace inhabited by the emperor—was where the emperor’s consorts, their gentlewomen, and female government officials lived and worked. The relationship among these three groups of women was in theory clear-cut, but in practice much less so. Naturally, the theory was provided by Chinese precedent, that of the *Book of Rites*, one of the five Confucian classics. It specified that an emperor have the following complement of women: one empress, three *bunin*, nine *hin*, 27 *sefu*, and 81 *gyosai*, a total of 121 women.⁴ The framers of the Japanese Taihō Code of 701 set forth a table of organization strikingly similar in structure and nomenclature to that of the *Book of Rites*, though not, it must be said, as generous in the numbers of women provided. In addition to the empress, there were to be two *hi*, three *bunin*, and four *hin*, a total of only ten women. The level at which a woman was appointed depended upon the rank of her family.⁵ However unfaithfully followed, the precedent of the *Book of Rites* lay behind much later thinking and some action concerning the staffing of the women’s palace.

Another noteworthy contrast is a characteristically Japanese departure from Chinese precedent. In China, eunuchs ran the women’s palace; in

Japan, women did. Accordingly, a subsection of the Taihō Code, "Rules for Staffing the Women's Palace," provided for the establishment of twelve bureaus within the women's palace. These were never intended as an extension of the official complement of consorts, yet one came close to replacing it. The bureaus were to be staffed entirely by women and to serve as counterparts to their equivalent departments outside the women's palace.⁶ For example, business originating in the (male) Department of Palace Supplies, insofar as it concerned the part of the palace occupied by the emperor, would be routed through the (female) Bureau of Palace Supplies. Beyond their designations, we have only the most general notion of the functions of these twelve bureaus, and no idea at all how they operated. Most seem never to have been fully staffed, and by the early thirteenth century they had fallen into disuse.

The twelve bureaus are of interest here only because of the one that did survive, the Bureau of Palace Attendants. The women appointed to it were to be the counterparts of the male chamberlains of the Ministry of Palace Affairs. Its complement was to consist of two chief palace attendants, four assistant chief palace attendants, four secretary palace attendants, and one hundred serving women.⁷ The prescribed duties of these women were to wait upon the emperor, to transmit petitions addressed to him, and to draft and transmit pronouncements issued by him. It was the former aspect of their work, broadly interpreted, that grew in importance over the years. As one scholar coyly puts it, "owing to the intimate nature of their service to the emperor, there were times when they were the recipients of a more personal sort of attention."⁸ Or in plainer language, "they later became the same as consorts and ladies of the wardrobe."⁹ In other words, the women of the Bureau of Palace Attendants, whose officially designated duties were bureaucratic and ceremonial, began to function also as imperial concubines. This surely accounts for the survival of their bureau through more than a thousand years of Japanese history, right down to the end of the Second World War.¹⁰ (In fairness, however, it should be recalled that in 1924, when Crown Prince Hirohito married, he abolished the custom that women of the bureau serve as concubines.)

In the eleventh century, it was possible to be appointed to a position in the Bureau of Palace Attendants and later be "promoted" to consort. Fujiwara no Michinaga's second daughter, Kenshi, for example, was first appointed chief palace attendant in 1004, advanced to consort in 1011, and then made empress of the Sanjō Emperor in 1012.¹¹ Indeed, precisely because chief palace attendants came so thoroughly to be regarded as

consorts of the emperor or the heir apparent, the actual work of the bureau was left to others: the assistant chief palace attendants, the secretary palace attendants, and lower-ranking women in service known as *myōbu*.

One requisite for appointment to the bureau in its earliest incarnation was the ability to compose Chinese-style prose. At this time, certain of the emperor's commands were transmitted in the form of documents called *naishisen*, written by palace attendants in this distinctly literate style. The parents of the unfortunate heroine of *The Tale of Takamura* have their daughter tutored in the Chinese classics with the specific intention of "making her a palace attendant."¹² (They fail to anticipate that her tutor, who is also her half-brother, will fall in love with her, that she will become pregnant, and—when the two are prevented from marrying—that she will waste away and die.) Sei Shōnagon, in the service of Empress Teishi, was famous for her ability to vie with the most learned of courtiers on the basis of her knowledge of the Chinese classics. In her *Pillow Book*, she described how Minamoto no Toshikata once jokingly "suggested he should petition the Emperor to appoint me a palace attendant."¹³

For 250 years, from the mid-fourteenth century until Konoe Sakiko's entry to court in 1586, empresses, consorts, and even chief palace attendants ceased to be appointed, because the imperial household no longer had sufficient income to support them. Their place in the emperor's life was taken by women from the middle ranks of the nobility who worked in the Bureau of Palace Attendants—which Nakako joined in 1601. Women appointed to the bureau were paid an income and received tribute—usually agricultural produce, but sometimes paper—from landed estates assigned to their offices.¹⁴ That is, the income was paid them *ex officio*, only so long as they held that office; it never became their personal property and could not normally be inherited or passed down. During the lean fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, some families did manage to monopolize one or another of the positions in the bureau, ensuring that the income (and access to the emperor) was passed from aunt to niece.¹⁵

For once appointed, so long as she did not become the mother of an imperial child, a woman held her position for life, or at least until she chose to retire. (Palace attendants who gave birth to imperial children generally became nuns upon the death of the emperor they had served.) Several aging incumbents appear as characters in *The Tale of Genji*: one is responsible for introducing Fujitsubo into the court of the Kiritsubo Emperor; another is the wrinkled coquette known to readers as Gen no

Naishi, for whose favors Genji and his friend and rival Tō no Chūjō pretend to compete.

In 1857, more than eight hundred years after such long-serving women made their appearance in fiction, the courtier Sanjō Sanetsumu had occasion to write to an administrator in the Tokugawa shogunate requesting additional funding for palace attendants. Sanetsumu's problem was precisely these older women with tenure. As he phrased it delicately:

Properly speaking, those assigned to sleep with His Majesty should be of upper-level rank; but it may happen occasionally that a lady of the middle level is honored as his favored companion. If the upper-level noblewomen are not attractive, this happens as a natural consequence. Even when, for one reason or another, there is a shortage of women to wait upon His Majesty, if the standard complement is filled, one can hardly make additional appointments. If an older lady requests that she be permitted to retire, then a new appointment can be made. But the ladies who have served for many years managing the affairs of the imperial household—to command them to retire with no good reason would be an extremely questionable practice. It goes without saying that continuity of the imperial line we revere as a matter of first importance to the nation. Yet if at the source thereof, there should be factors that prevent a broadening of opportunity, and the imperial stock, in ways that we cannot foresee, should prove inadequate, that would be a disaster of unparalleled magnitude.¹⁶

Lack of attractive young women who could bear the emperor's children was not a problem in the seventeenth century; quite the contrary. If all the available positions were already filled, women could still be appointed as *gon* or "acting" palace attendants, outside the table of organization. This was Nakako's eventual position in the hierarchy of the bureau: acting assistant chief palace attendant, in Japanese, *gon naishi no suke*, often abbreviated to *gon no suke*, acting assistant. Adding to the official complement of women in this way, GoYōzei fathered twenty-five children; his son, Emperor GoMizuno'ō, fathered a staggering thirty-seven.

We may suppose, then, that the Nakanoin arranged—perhaps even lobbied—for Nakako to become an imperial concubine for a variety of reasons: in part, for the income that would be hers, however minuscule; in part, because it was the only way that a bright and well-educated noblewoman might have what we would now call a career—with lifetime tenure,

no less. And also because her father, who had only recently been recalled from exile by GoYōzei, would not have been in a position to refuse the emperor, should he have suggested that Nakako join the other women in his service. After all, the appointment offered the possibility of becoming maternal relatives to an imperial son, still a situation of potential benefit and even greater prestige for a young woman and her family.

LIFE AS AN IMPERIAL CONCUBINE

The principal source for understanding the working lives of palace attendants is the logbook that they themselves compiled, the *Daily Records*, entries from which have been cited several times already in the course of this narrative.¹⁷ *Daily Records* is an abbreviated translation of the Japanese title *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, which means “Daily Records of the Honorable Ladies Serving Beyond the Bath,” so called because the office where women employed in the Bureau of Palace Attendants worked was situated next to the imperial bath.¹⁸ Bathing the emperor and washing and dressing his hair were important duties of palace attendants, so it is not surprising that their duty room was nearby. Extant sections of the *Daily Records* begin in 1477, when the decade-long Ōnin War, during which much of Kyoto was reduced to ashes, finally came to an end. Entries continue, with many lacunae, through 1826. Unfortunately, entries for three of the eight years Nakako was in service at the palace—1602, 1605, and 1606—have been lost.

The emperor, of course, is the central figure in the *Daily Records*: the state of his health, his annual round of ceremonies, the meals he partook of, the poetry parties he presided over, and the endless stream of visitors he entertained are all recorded; and note is duly made of gifts and tribute he received—everything from the thousand pieces of silver presented by Ieyasu when he called upon GoYōzei after his appointment as shogun to simple gifts of seasonal fruit from his womenfolk.¹⁹ Most entries are brief to the point of mere formulae—and entirely anonymous. Given the many centuries over which the *Daily Records* was compiled, clearly a great number of palace attendants took their turn at entering the day’s events. These women’s individual subjectivities are beyond retrieval, but there is a sort of general subjectivity—a professional attitude, at least—that can be discerned. That attitude is positive, and so far as possible, points up the auspicious. “Everything went smoothly and it was a joyous occasion” is a common refrain.²⁰ To be sure, the cultivation of correct courtly behavior

and the suppression of personal feelings are the *sine qua non* of the courtier, male and female alike, so it is no surprise that individual reactions go unrecorded. Naturally, the women's perspective is that of the emperor, and people and events are evaluated according to their impact on the imperial pleasure. Recall, for example, that when Michikatsu was censured for his affair with the Lady Iyo, disapproval was expressed; but following his pardon, when he presented himself to a different emperor, delight was the order of the day.

As well as bathing and clothing the emperor and dressing his hair, palace attendants had a number of other duties. These included serving the emperor's meals; being in attendance whenever the empress mother, the consort, or one of the prince-abbots or imperial abbesses came to call; accompanying the emperor whenever he paid a visit to the empress mother or the consort's apartments; and arranging the giving and receiving of gifts. They performed sacred dances known as *kagura*; recited the *Heart Sutra*—at 262 characters, the shortest of the Buddhist scriptures—on the emperor's birthday, which was celebrated monthly; and visited important shrines and temples on behalf of the emperor. They were also charged with guarding the imperial regalia of mirror, sword, and jewel, though there is no mention of this particular duty during Nakako's tenure at the bureau.

References to *gon no suke*, "the acting assistant," in the *Daily Records* for 1608 give a good idea of Nakako's duties in the imperial palace. She served the emperor his morning meal a total of ten times that year: on the first, second, third, and fifteenth days of the first month; on the first day of the third month; on the first and fifth days of the fifth month; and on the first day of the seventh, the ninth, and the twelfth months. In this she was assisted by the palace attendants Hei no Naishi, Naka no Naishi, or Kan no Naishi, and three ladies of lesser rank: Iyo, Sanuki, or Izumo. She presented gifts to the emperor three times: steamed rice with adzuki beans on 4.18 and persimmons on 8.9 and 10.13. On 2.25 she performed *kagura*, and on 9.4 she went to the temple at Kurama as the emperor's representative. At a gala party on 7.11 she served the sixth round of drinks. The entry reads:

Clear skies. A barrel of saké was received from the Prince-Abbot of the Takenouchi Palace. His Majesty partook of celebratory drinks. He partook of the customary seven rounds in the Imperial Study. The Prince accompanied him. All of the men were in attendance. The first three rounds were poured by the Prince; the fourth round by Shin'ōsuke; the

fifth by His Majesty; the sixth by the Acting Assistant; the seventh by Kanshūji. Everything went smoothly and it was a joyous occasion, truly a joyous occasion.²¹

Although the emperor is at the center of the *Daily Records* and the unmentioned grammatical subject of the majority of its sentences, the log-book is also the record of a uniquely female space at the heart of the imperial institution. Not only are the women's comings and goings noted—when they first enter the palace, when they are absent for a period of mourning—their pregnancies and safe deliveries are also celebrated, and even their menstrual cycles are mentioned. On 1603.10.23, a palace attendant was given an obi in a ceremony in which the emperor acknowledged paternity of her child; on 12.17 she gave birth to a boy who would be known as the Eighth Prince; on 1604.1.18, the postpartum taboo period ended and she returned to the palace with gifts of saké and enjoyed a celebratory drink.²² Menstruating women remained on duty in the palace, but they did not serve meals. Living and working together, palace attendants' menstrual cycles sometimes synchronized, and this could leave the bureau very short-handed, or *tenashi*, “without hands,” as the court women's expression has it. Alternative arrangements for serving the emperor's meals had to be made. Occasionally, even that was impossible and the emperor seems to have missed out on dinner altogether! Entries for 1608.7.6 and 1608.9.9 record that “no meal was served because everyone had her period.”²³

Never explicitly mentioned in the *Daily Records* is the final duty of the day for palace attendants—attending the emperor in his bedchamber. If later records are anything to go by, it seems that the young women of the bureau were assigned to sleep with the emperor in rotation.²⁴ How old they were when they began to be rostered to receive the imperial seed is unclear. After they came of age in their sixteenth year would seem a reasonable guess—but then Emperor GoYōzei's own daughter, Princess Ki-yoko, had already given birth to her first child *before* her coming-of-age was celebrated on 1608.6.16. Of course the princess was not an imperial concubine, but her role was not so very different from theirs. Born to GoYōzei's Consort Konoe Sakiko in 1593, she was married to the future Chancellor Takatsukasa Nobuhisa on 1604.7.27, and as his wife it was her duty to produce “an heir and a spare” at the very least. When she gave birth to her first child, a daughter, on 1607.1.22, she was at most fourteen years old; her second child, a son, was born on 1609.2.4.²⁵ Extreme youth certainly did not preclude productive sexual relations. Shin'ōsuke, one of

Nakako's colleagues, was especially privileged to celebrate her coming-of-age with Princess Kiyoko,²⁶ but, alas, there is no mention of Nakako's coming-of-age ceremony in the *Daily Records*. If she was born in 1590 or 1591, she would have been in her sixteenth year in 1605 or 1606, two of the years for which the *Daily Records* is no longer extant.

In Christendom, where monogamy was the law and mistresses the only alternative, sons borne by mistresses were bastards, barred from the succession. Outside Christendom, where concubines provided plentiful opportunity for rulers to beget offspring, sons borne by such women generally suffered no disability.²⁷ In Japan, women of the Bureau of Palace Attendants did not enjoy the same status as the emperor's officially designated consorts, but a son borne by one of their number could perfectly well become emperor. And did: the mother of the early sixteenth-century Emperor GoNara was a palace attendant, as were the mothers of the late seventeenth-century Emperor Reigen and the early eighteenth-century Emperor Nakamikado. The last palace attendant to give birth to a future emperor was Yanagihara Naruko, who was appointed acting assistant chief palace attendant (*gon naishi no suke*, the same position as Nakako) in 1873 and became the mother of Emperor Taisho.²⁸

From this distance it is impossible to judge the extent to which Nakako was favored with GoYōzei's intimate attentions as she grew up. All we can say is that she is not listed as the mother of any of his twenty-five children. Apart from his Consort Sakiko, who bore the emperor twelve children, GoYōzei had children by at least eight other women, six of whom served in the Bureau of Palace Attendants.²⁹ Several sources mention that GoYōzei was particularly fond of two of Nakako's colleagues: Lady Hirohashi—the Shin'ōsuke whose coming-of-age ceremony was mentioned above—daughter of Hirohashi Kanekatsu; and Lady Karahashi, known as Kan no Naishi, who was the daughter of Karahashi Arimichi.³⁰ Despite the emperor's reported fondness for them, neither of these women bore imperial children. Nonetheless, their appointment to the Bureau of Palace Attendants meant that each had a job, with a small income, for life—or such, at least, was the plan.

O-KUNI DANCES IN THE CAPITAL

Palace attendants enjoyed something of a social life. They were present at many of the same events that court nobles attended, from banquets to

poetry parties, where one of their duties was to pour saké. Occasionally the men would pour drinks for the women too, and things could get quite wild.³¹ The middle-ranking courtier Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi's account of a party in the fifth month of 1603 is revealing:

4th day; clear skies. The day after tomorrow, on the sixth, I have been summoned to the palace of the Empress Mother for some "little girl dance." I am the only one of the outer guards invited. . . .

6th day; clear skies. There was a party given by the Consort [Konoe Sakiko] at the palace of the Empress Mother. It was a performance of "little girl dance." The female musicians and dancers were from Izumo. Everyone high and low gathered for it. I proceeded there at the hour of the serpent [midmorning, between 9 and 11 a.m.] Ano [Saneaki] and I were the only two of the outer guards present. We had a meal in Shōnagon's room. There was a round of drinks, and the Abbess of the Kōshōin did the honors. After the dancing finished, we had soup and noodles in the presence of Her Highness. There were two or three more rounds of drinks. We sang several Noh passages; I began the chanting and Hirohashi joined in with the first *shite* passage [when the principal actor makes his appearance]. We danced various dances, each in our turn. We were even served drinks by the Empress Mother, and got extremely drunk. I presented a tray for drinking cups and a cask of pure saké to the Consort. . . .

7th day; rain. I was hung over and quite out of sorts. In the evening, I went to the palace of the Empress Mother and the residence of the Consort to offer my thanks. I met [the gentlewomen] Shōnagon, Azechi, and Emon no Kami, and offered them one and all my thanks.³²

It must have been quite a party! With saké flowing freely and the emperor conspicuously absent, his mother, his consort, and various of his male and female courtiers enjoyed watching a performance of a new kind of dancing, and after it was over they carried on carousing till late.

The new kind of dancing Tokiyoshi witnessed he called *yayako odori*, "little girl dance." Funabashi Hidekata, another middle-ranking courtier who was present, called it instead *kabuki odori*, "kabuki dancing." His is the first known use of the term *kabuki* to refer to a style of dance-performance.³³ In this, its earliest form, kabuki was performed by women and girls. As both courtiers note, the troupe they watched came from the

province of Izumo, home to the ancient Grand Shrine of Izumo. The troupe's leader claimed to have been a *miko*, sometimes translated as "shrine maiden," and she was known as O-Kuni (the O is an honorific prefix, and Kuni her given name). O-Kuni and her troupe caused a sensation when they performed in Kyoto in 1603. Here is a contemporary description of her, this time from a warrior's hand:

Of late a dance known as kabuki has appeared in the capital. It is performed by a woman called Kuni, a shrine maiden from the province of Izumo, but she is not particularly beautiful. She imitates the town dandies, and her sword, dagger, and costume are all most outlandish. The scenes where she plays a man jesting with a teahouse girl are popular, and all those in the capital, nobles and commoners, flock to view them. She has even danced several times at Fushimi Castle. Copying her model, others have established kabuki troupes and travel about the country performing.³⁴

The censorious tone is unmistakable. Disapproval would remain the warriors' official take on kabuki. O-Kuni and her troupe may have performed for Ieyasu at Fushimi Castle, but his son, the shogun-in-waiting Hidetada, so frowned on the phenomenon that, for the present at least, he refused even to talk about it, much less watch it.³⁵ The problem was that performances were often only thinly veiled advertisements for what would be on sale after the show, and brawls would break out between spectators competing for the favors of the dancers. Much later, in 1629, the shogunate banned women from appearing on stage, which led to the development of kabuki as we know it today, an all-male art. In the early seventeenth century, however, women's kabuki was all the rage.

About O-Kuni herself, we know almost nothing.³⁶ But contemporary depictions of her convey a strong sense of the allure of her art—and corroborate in every particular the account quoted above. Several paintings survive that depict in luxuriant detail "Man Jestng with a Teahouse Girl." In one, O-Kuni lounges on a chair near the rear of the stage, her right leg cocked upon the knee of her left, her face masked like that of a client who wishes to remain incognito, and clad in garishly decorated kimono, with two very long swords at her waist. Negotiations with the teahouse girl seem to be conducted by the "client's" retainer, who is almost as outlandishly dressed as O-Kuni.³⁷ In another version, the leading role is played by

one of O-Kuni's many competitors, who went by the name of Uneme. This "young man" is unmasked but no less gaudily decked out than O-Kuni. With his left arm he leans casually upon his long sword in its multicolored, spiral-striped scabbard; with the thumb and forefinger of his right hand he daintily grips a fan. Numerous accessories dangle from his obi, and about his neck he has slung a large-beaded rosary, with a cross of smaller jewels swaying below it. The "young man's" retainer, bearing his master's brocaded folding stool over his shoulder, wears a mischievous look on his face as he waggles his finger at the teahouse girl, who with all false modesty giggles behind her scarf. The calligraphy of the accompanying text has been attributed to none other than Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, the young courtier who was an imperial emissary at the siege of Tanabe Castle—and whom we shall meet again as a participant in the dragon-scale scandal.³⁸

Another of O-Kuni's offerings was called "Dancing in Praise of the Buddha." In this number, O-Kuni herself is the protagonist; and so ecstatic is her voice as she dances her devotions that she is heard in the netherworld by her dead lover-cum-impresario, Nagoya Sanzaburō, who returns to the world of the living, dressed in black with a rosary of gigantic beads about his neck, to join in dancing with her.³⁹ No less entertaining than the antics upon the stage, though, at least to a present-day viewer, is the incredible variety of those who make up kabuki's audience. A young mother suckling her baby; a minor court official; an old woman with her little granddaughter; a puzzled foreigner in pantaloons and a tall hat, escorted by a Japanese companion, also dressed in Portuguese style; an old man, hard of hearing, with his hand cupped to his ear; a young samurai, not quite as richly dressed as those on stage, but wearing a Portuguese collar over his kimono—as well as others who attempt to disguise their attendance at the spectacle with fans and face masks.⁴⁰ Our anonymous warrior shows considerable restraint when he says only, "all those in the capital, nobles and commoners, flock[ed] to view them."

Eyewitness accounts of kabuki are rapturous: people speak of being transported to another world by the cross-dressing O-Kuni and her dancing. A scene in *Kuni Kabuki in Pictures and Words* shows members of the audience so carried away they have jumped up on stage to join O-Kuni and Sanzaburō. An elderly retainer of the Nakamura was put to death for his excessive fondness for kabuki.⁴¹ Clearly, performances of kabuki dancing were worth risking a great deal to see. GoYōzei's mother and his

consort so wanted to see for themselves that they summoned O-Kuni's troupe to their apartments within the imperial palace compound to perform.⁴² In hosting such outré entertainments, they unwittingly encouraged a taste for excitement among courtiers and imperial concubines that in the end could no longer be satisfied within the palace. Over the months to come, some would take greater and greater risks, not simply to watch O-Kuni and her "little girls" dance suggestively, but to gratify their desires in some more immediate manner.⁴³



Scene from *Kuni Kabuki in Pictures and Words*, showing O-Kuni (sporting a long sword) and her lover and impresario Nagoya Sanzaburō (wearing a black hat) joined onstage by enthusiastic members of the audience. Early seventeenth-century illustrated scroll.

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Chapter 4

SCANDAL

To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love.

—JANE AUSTEN, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

Ieyasu had been shogun for just over two years. On 1605.4.7 he retired, and his son Hidetada was duly appointed shogun to succeed him. Knowing as we do that the Tokugawa shogunate endured for 264 years, it is easy to assume that by the time of the second shogun, those defeated at the battle of Sekigahara had accustomed themselves to the new dispensation. Such was by no means the case. A sense of uncertainty lingered in the capital. The losers in the post-Sekigahara settlement were everywhere. Thousands of men were made ronin in the huge sorting out that took place as the Tokugawa consolidated their grip on power. Many had been warriors all their lives; they were battle-hardened, fierce, and utterly unsuited to civilian life. They milled about in the big cities, where disagreements rapidly escalated into fights as they looked for ways to survive, preferably in the profession of arms. This was the world in which the dragon-scale scandal erupted: political precariousness, violence in the streets, and a new form of entertainment—kabuki—that was worth risking everything to see.

A VOLATILE CAPITAL

With so many unemployed ronin available, the unscrupulous could always find some who were prepared to work as bodyguards—or as assassins for hire. On 1605.3.18, the abbot of the Shōkokuji in Kyoto recorded a shocking sight he'd seen that morning:

Rain from morning. On our way out of the capital . . . south of Nakamura River, east of the middle moat, we came upon a dead body. Crows and kites were eating it. When I asked [my servant?] Saiji about it, he explained that the previous evening at dusk, a band of men, their leader on horseback, with two lance bearers and twenty samurai in attendance, appeared from the Yanagihara direction, and on the slope of the levee suddenly they caught [someone] by his obi; they cut off his head, put up a signpost, and returned to the capital. The majority of them bore battle wounds.¹

Summer came, and in the heat the violence escalated. By 6.18, the abbot despaired:

Clear skies from morning. Of late, whether by day or night, people are murdered randomly. One hears of men who boast that they have cut down a thousand people. Truly this is the ultimate in disorder. It is said that they will kill anyone, women and children included. Poor monks who are all alone hardly dare venture forth. This is the ultimate disorder; it is beyond description.²

Something had to be done to put a stop to the killings, punish those responsible, and persuade the terrorized populace that the Tokugawa shogunate could protect them. The man charged with accomplishing all this was the shogunal deputy in Kyoto, Itakura Iga-no-Kami Katsushige. ("Iga-no-Kami," Governor of Iga Province, was his nominal court title, which also served as his familiar name.) Itakura had been a Zen monk until his early thirties, when he returned to secular life to take the place of his elder brother, who had been killed in battle. He was from Ieyasu's old province of Mikawa and enjoyed his complete confidence.³

The court noble Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi was another who had been troubled by the violence on the streets of the capital. In his diary he wrote:

6th month, 12th day; clear skies. I sent a messenger to En'ami, telling him that I was distressed about the wounding of his disciple Jurin. . . .

13th day; extremely hot weather. I paid a visit to En'ami and heard that Jurin's wound is slight. I sent a messenger with salve.

15th day; clear skies, hot; later a cool breeze blew. I understand that three people, who have cut down a thousand people each, were arrested, and that [those who arrested them] twisted off their fingers before handing them over. Even so, [the killings] still do not stop.

16th day; clear skies, extremely hot. I understand that Itakura Iga-no-Kami himself patrolled the streets of the capital last night. This was in order to resolve the random killings.

17th day; clear skies, the hottest day yet. The gist of Itakura Iga-no-Kami's command to the military liaison officers was that they were to enjoin the other nobles not to hire as servants anyone that they suspected of random killing, and not to go out at night.⁴

The "military liaison officers" Tokiyoshi mentions were mid-ranking courtiers whose job it was to mediate between the imperial court and the Tokugawa shogunate. Communication between emperor and shogun was not conducted directly: the liaison officers conveyed the emperor's wishes to the shogun via his deputy, and vice versa.

Itakura's "command" to the officers is contained in another courtier's diary, kept by Yamashina Tokitsune:

6th month, 16th day; clear skies. A messenger from [the military liaison officers] Hirohashi and Kanshūji arrived bearing a letter from Itakura that read:

With all due respect, I take the liberty to address you. I understand that of late there have been some random killings in your vicinity. I have issued strict orders in various quarters concerning this. In the palace and among the court nobility you are to check very carefully and issue appropriate orders. Particularly with regard to the sumo wrestlers that I have heard some of you keep, I strongly recommend that you investigate people of this sort. You should make a report concerning this matter in the imperial presence.⁵

Itakura's suggestion that courtiers were hiring sumo wrestlers rather than unemployed samurai to protect them is intriguing. Sumo wrestlers, recruited from all over Japan, had displayed their prowess before the

emperor annually since the eighth century; in these unsettled and dangerous times, it is conceivable that some of them were persuaded to remain in the capital as bodyguards—or worse, as Itakura seems to suspect—rather than return to the provinces when their matches were over.

Clearly the early seventeenth century was still a volatile age. People unaccustomed to the luxury of being able to plan for the future behaved with a reckless disregard for the consequences, and their misbehavior ran the gamut from unbridled dancing through cold-blooded murder. Others threw themselves away in *crimes passionnels*. In 1606, a warrior suspected of murder was disenfeoffed and placed under house arrest—though some reckoned the real reason for his punishment was a clandestine affair with a palace attendant.⁶ The next year, several courtier diaries mention that a noble by the name of Inokuma Noritoshi, a major in the Palace Guards, had been censured for an affair rumored to involve a young woman in the empress mother's entourage. Like Michikatsu more than twenty years earlier, the young man fled the capital rather than wait to be banished.⁷

Inokuma was a flamboyant figure who cut a wide swath through the first decade of the seventeenth century. He appears frequently in contemporary records—attending seasonal observances at the palace, on guard duty, serving as scribe at linked-verse parties.⁸ He was also a womanizer, good-looking and stylish, the reincarnation, some felt, of the ninth-century courtier Ariwara no Narihira, hero of *Tales of Ise*. Here in Butler's translation is a later description of him.

At this time there was a low-ranking courtier named Inokuma who was the most handsome man in the land. His style was extravagant, as seen in the type of kimono he wore, in the way he tied his sash, and even in the manner in which he fixed his hair. These fashions became known as the "Inokuma style." Picture prints and folding fans portraying Inokuma and the fashions he set reached far into the countryside. His name was as widely known in the realm as that of Narihira of old. Since his appearance was so striking, it put ideas into the heads of all who saw him, male and female, base and noble.⁹

A contemporary source takes a less sanguine view of the young man, pronouncing him "the most debauched of all the court nobles."¹⁰ Inokuma had supposedly left Kyoto after he was censured in 1607, but when a palace attendant was suddenly dismissed two years later, rumor had it that he

was also involved with her. The most vivid account of this scandal appears in the diary of middle-ranking courtier Itsutsuji Yukinaka:

[1609] 1st month, 12th day; clear skies. Lady Nagahashi has been dismissed. Shocking! Shocking! When His Majesty, the Consort, and five gentlewomen inspected the north room, she was dismissed from her duties and banished beyond the gates [of the palace]. Next, there was an inspection of the green room. His Majesty and the Consort retired at the hour of the rat [about midnight]. The shutters were lowered. On night watch were [Nakanoin] Michimura, [Madenokōji] Takafusa, [Jimyōin] Motohisa, and myself.¹¹

The “Lady Nagahashi” mentioned here was Jimyōin Motoko, sister of the Motohisa who was on guard duty with Itsutsuji that night. (Nakako’s elder brother Michimura was also on duty.) In 1602, Motoko had given birth to GoYōzei’s sixth son and then returned to work.¹² Her title “Nagahashi no Tsubone” indicates that her quarters were located in the “room at the long bridge,” adjacent to the passageway connecting the Seiryōden, where the emperor lived, with the rear of the Shishinden, the Hall of State. Her title also functioned as a synonym for her office of senior secretary of palace attendants. This was a powerful position within the hierarchy of the Bureau of Palace Attendants, for the incumbent was in charge of imperial household accounts. She also received petitions, and in response she drafted documents expressing the imperial will known as *nyōbō hōsho*, literally “court women’s directives.” *Nyōbō hōsho* were written in the Japanese kana syllabary; they replaced the *naishisen* of earlier times that had been written in Chinese characters.¹³ Despite the responsible position Jimyōin Motoko occupied and the fact that she had borne an imperial child, by all accounts her relationship with Emperor GoYōzei was stormy: dismissed from court service on 1609.1.12, she was recalled a few months later, on 1609.8.6, and then dismissed again at the end of the following year. Neither Itsutsuji nor other courtiers who record her dismissal in their diaries say why she so angered the emperor, but commentators suggest that his wrath is “connected to” the imperial censure and flight of Inokuma Noritoshi two years earlier. In other words, they suggest that GoYōzei suspected her of an ongoing affair with Inokuma.¹⁴

Illicit relationships between courtiers and palace attendants were hardly unusual.¹⁵ What made the ensuing dragon-scale scandal different

from sporadic earlier incidents were the sheer number of men and women involved—at least fourteen—and the emperor’s reaction. I have chosen to examine three different accounts of events here. The first is the version given in the *Daily Records*, the logbook of the Bureau of Palace Attendants, where Nakako had worked since 1601. Occasionally this spare chronicle will be supplemented by entries in courtiers’ diaries, to show the scandal from the entire court’s point of view, from the inside looking out. The second version of events was composed by an aged warrior in 1610, only a few months after the punishments of those involved had been carried out. In language full of literary flourishes and portentous moralizing, we are presented with a view of the scandal by an outsider looking in, disapprovingly. The third version of events, discussed in the next chapter, is an amusing and ironic take on the scandal composed by an unknown hand at some point during the first half of the seventeenth century, in the form of a novelette in which Nakako appears as a character.

GEKIRIN

From the middle of the sixth month of 1609, a flurry of entries in courtiers’ diaries record rumors circulating about the “lax behavior” of palace attendants. Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi, the father of one of them, the imperial concubine known as Hei no Naishi, was summoned to the palace three successive days and interrogated by the emperor’s former wet nurse. He strenuously denied that his daughter was guilty of any wrongdoing. By the end of the sixth month, it was “forbidden to enter or leave the empress mother’s apartments; they say that there is an investigation under way concerning laxness on the part of women serving in the palace, and I understand that both the serving woman Tsuru and the menial Tato have been summoned and sequestered.”¹⁶

There is no mention of any of this in the *Daily Records*. Gifts—including four white swans from Hideyori—were received as usual, and the annual airing of books in the imperial collection took place, also as usual. But at the beginning of the seventh month, entries in the palace attendants’ logbook begin to look ominous.

1st day: Sudden downpour, tremendous thunder. His Majesty took his morning cup of saké. No meal was served because no one could be found.

Afflicted with vomiting and diarrhea, he took his evening saké within.

The men on duty made their appearance in the message room.

2nd day: Sudden downpour, thunder as well.

3rd day: [blank]

On the fourth the scandal finally broke:

4th day: Clear skies. The five [women] Shin'ōsuke, Gon no Suke, Naka no Naishi, Kan no Naishi, and Sanuki, because of their bad behavior, were restricted to the custody of their parents; moreover, the men too were sentenced to something or other.¹⁷

The five palace attendants mentioned here have been identified: Shin'ōsuke was the daughter of military liaison officer Hirohashi Kanekatsu; Gon no Suke was Nakanoin Nakako; Naka no Naishi was the daughter of Minase Ujinari and a second cousin of Nakako's; Kan no Naishi was the daughter of Karahashi Arimichi; and Sanuki was the sister of the court dentist Kaneyasu Bingo-no-Kami Yoritsugu. Their "bad behavior"? According to one diarist: "Last year, in the seventh month, they went to view dancing, apparently; this became known and, as a result, it's said, they have been expelled." The following day, when he listed the men, he also noted the much more serious misconduct they stood accused of:

5th day; clear. From the seventh month of last year, the Karasumaru Imperial Advisor, the Ōinomikado Colonel, Tokudaiji, the Kasannoin Major, the Asukai Major, the Matsunoki Major, and Nanba, the above seven seduced court ladies, so I understand, and the misbehavior of these seven was announced yesterday.¹⁸

Not listed here are the two other men involved: the notorious Inokuma Noritoshi and Kaneyasu Bingo, the brother of Sanuki. Both seem to have been regarded by other courtiers as beneath their notice, since they are never mentioned in their diary entries about the scandal. Only warrior chroniclers note that there were nine nobles in all.¹⁹ The official history of the Tokugawa shogunate lists the nine men by name and court office, and also states that Kaneyasu had been subjected to torture and revealed all. No contemporary source mentions torture, but it is certainly possible that he had been coerced into a confession.²⁰

Betrayed by men he saw frequently and women with whom he was physically intimate, GoYōzei was so angry that, as the *Daily Records* reveals, he was sick to his stomach. In high dudgeon, he ordered that a report be sent to Shogunal Deputy Itakura, who forwarded it to Ieyasu. While they awaited his response, word of the scandal spread quickly. Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi recorded rumors that both Hideyoshi's widow Nei, who had become a nun and lived in Kyoto at the temple she had founded, the Kōdaiji, and Tokugawa Sen, the young wife of Hideyori, had sent messages of concern through intermediaries.²¹ Another contemporary source states that "in the palace and throughout the capital, all was in an extraordinary uproar; the common people made a big joke of it." And no wonder: according to the same source, not only were the concubines rumored to have partied at courtiers' homes, they had actually been seen abroad, at Kitano Shrine in the north of the capital and at Kiyomizu Temple in the east.²²

Two entries from the *Daily Records* convey the emperor's isolation and the atmosphere of gloom that enveloped the palace.

7th day; clear. His Majesty composed poems for the Tanabata festival. The Tō Palace Attendant brought the inkstone. Thereafter, the inkstone was taken to the Empress Mother's palace and the Consort's palace, and then returned by the Tō Palace Attendant. His Majesty took his morning saké; he did not take his meal. There being nobody around, he took his evening saké within. The Prince did not appear. The Consort did not appear either. In the message room, the men had a round of drinks and Lady Iyo poured. . . .

8th day; rain. [. . .] It being a celebratory occasion today, he partook of seven cups of saké. There being nobody around, he partook within. Neither the Prince nor the Consort was present. None of the other palaces was represented. In the men's duty room, with the Secretary pouring, there was a round of drinks. The Prince, the Abbess of the Daishōji, My Lord Ichijō, the Ninth Prince, the Fifth Prince, the Tenth Prince, [those at] the children's palace, the Consort, all partook of saké. His Majesty partook of a single cup of saké with strips of kelp on the veranda. . . .

asaborake
uji no kawagiri
taedae ni

As with dawn the mist
clears from this dismal affair,
faintly into view

arawarewataru
*seze no ajirogi*²³

emerge the outlines of things
 that took place from time to time.

Normally the Tanabata star festival on the seventh of the seventh month and the Ikutama All Souls observance the following day were lively occasions at the palace. A banquet attended by the emperor's children and his consort was held, and everyone drank to his long life.²⁴ This year the emperor was alone save for the courtiers and palace attendants on duty. No member of his immediate family was game enough to appear in person. The inclusion of a poem in the *Daily Records* is also unusual. It is a well-known verse by the early eleventh-century courtier Fujiwara no Sadayori, most likely quoted here from the *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each* primer of Japanese poetry. Traditionally it has been interpreted to mean "As the dawn mist on the Uji River clears, the timbers of the fish weirs upon the rapids emerge faintly into view." But in the context of GoYōzei's discovery of the sex scandal involving five of his concubines and nine of his courtiers, the poem can be understood rather differently.

In the middle of the seventh month, the shogunal deputy's third son, Itakura Naizen-no-Kami Shigemasa, a young man of twenty-one who was a personal attendant to the retired shogun, arrived in Kyoto with Ieyasu's response to the emperor's report. The *Daily Records* gives this summary of it: "Itakura Naizen came up from Suruga as the envoy of the previous Shogun, who said that His Majesty's distress at the behavior of the women was entirely justified, and that he should punish them however he saw fit. Naizen was presented with twenty perfumed sachets."²⁵

Offered a free rein by Ieyasu, GoYōzei attempted to press his advantage. Court sources speak of *gekirin*: his dragon's contrariwise scales had been sorely irritated, and he was breathing fire. Warrior sources are blunt: GoYōzei commanded that the guilty courtiers and concubines should all be "executed, painfully, and before mine own eyes."²⁶ But the savage punishment he wanted to witness was completely unprecedented in court society. The sanctioned punishment of aristocratic wrongdoers was banishment.²⁷ Beside himself with rage, GoYōzei had, it seemed, taken leave of his senses. Not surprisingly, the shogunal deputy deemed the matter of sufficient gravity to warrant further direct instructions from Ieyasu.

"This is hardly the first time something of this sort has happened in the palace!" the retired shogun is said to have remarked when told of the scandal. His amused reaction is recorded in no less a source than the official

history of the Tokugawa shogunate.²⁸ Perhaps he was recalling the several episodes involving fickle palace attendants in *The Tale of Genji*. The most extended and subtle treatment of such a relationship involves the chief palace attendant known as Oborozukiyo and the two men who love her, the Emperor Suzaku and his younger brother, the Shining Genji. Suzaku can well see why a woman would be attracted to Genji and is inclined to forgive his favorite concubine. It is Genji—a man who has cuckolded not only his elder brother but also his own father—who displays a dark and unforgiving fury when he is himself cuckolded late in life. Discovering that his young wife, the Third Princess, is pregnant by the courtier Kashiwagi, he reflects:

It is bad enough when a woman one never much liked, a passing amusement, turns out to be involved with somebody else, and one then loses interest in her; but in this case, to think of the insolence of the man! In early times as well there were those who might violate an Emperor's wife, but that was different. No wonder liaisons like that may occur, when there are so many people in palace service waiting on the Sovereign. What with one thing and another it must happen quite often. Even a Consort or an Intimate may err for this reason or that. They are not all as serious as they might be, and strange things happen, but as long as no obvious lapse comes to light the man can carry on as before, and it may be ages before anyone finds out. I honor her [the Third Princess] above anyone else and sacrifice my personal feelings to treat her with the highest respect, and she just sets me aside? Why, I have never heard of such a thing! He snapped his fingers in anger.²⁹

These are telling observations about the opportunities presented by service in the imperial palace, written by a woman who served an empress and knew well the dangerous shoals upon which a man and a woman might come to grief in that world. More than five hundred years later, in the real world of the late sixteenth-century court, Nakako's father, Michikatsu, became the victim of a consuming affair with an imperial concubine, and there were others like them, such as Inokuma Noritoshi and Jimyōin Motoko. But GoYōzei does not seem to have been able to emulate the fictional Emperor Suzaku's equanimity. Rather, like Genji, he seems to have been overwhelmed with rage, followed closely by a most unbecoming desire for vengeance. It fell to Ieyasu to attempt to appease him.

At the beginning of the eighth month, the retired shogun sent two trusted emissaries to Kyoto with his carefully worded advice. These were Ōsawa Motoie and Itakura Naizen-no-Kami Shigemasa. Ōsawa, whose mother was a noblewoman, had been responsible for negotiating Ieyasu's appointment as shogun with the court. The *Daily Records* gives this summary of what transpired:

Ōsawa [Motoie] and Itakura Naizen were sent up to the capital from Suruga. As for the unrestrained behavior of the women, His Majesty's rage (*gekirin*) was entirely justified, and he should punish them as he saw fit. Be that as it may, so as not to attract the criticism of future generations, the inquiry should be conducted in a spirit of magnanimity. The Edo Shogun too sent Horino Awaji to the capital, with a letter for [military liaison officer] Kanshūji. It said that in the present matter, His Majesty was entirely justified, and that he should convene a meeting of the regental houses. The Kanshūji Middle Counselor and the Sanjōnishi Middle Counselor acted as messengers. All gathered at the palace and met with His Majesty in the audience chamber. His Majesty said that he felt the current situation was intolerable and he was minded to hand down severe punishments. What was their view? They replied that His Majesty was entirely justified; and accordingly Ōsawa was informed of His Majesty's wishes.³⁰

Browbeaten by GoYōzei, the heads of the regental houses were reluctant to confront him with their opposition to the barbarous punishment he was proposing and—as we see here—they quickly abandoned any attempt to make him see reason and simply passed the problem to the military authorities to deal with.

This entry in the *Daily Records* is as far as we can follow the unfolding scandal in a female-authored source. Henceforward, meetings between heads of the regental houses and the shogunal deputy took place away from the palace and the emperor, which meant that palace attendants were not privy to the deliberations. To find out how the Nakanoin were weathering the storm and what happened next, we must look elsewhere.³¹

The most regular chronicler of these events is Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi, whose daughter Tokiko, the imperial concubine known as Hei no Naishi, had given birth to a girl, assumed to be GoYōzei's seventh daughter, only two months before the dragon-scale scandal erupted.³² Tokiko had

escaped being implicated in the scandal herself, at least in part thanks to her father's emphatic denials. In the heat of the seventh month, Tokiyoshi called on all the courtiers involved. Some said they were indisposed, others claimed to have guests, but Nakako's father, Michikatsu, was at home and willing to meet him. Tokiyoshi presented his gift of saké, "he met with me calmly, we talked the matter over, and I returned home."³³ At this point, either they had no idea how angry the emperor was and what he wanted done to the guilty, or they did know—but thought execution so unlikely a prospect that they were not especially concerned.

Michikatsu had actually met Ieyasu and had the opportunity to form his own impression of the man. He had paid several calls on the shogun at Fushimi Castle in the capital; and in the eighth month of 1608, he had traveled to Sunpu with the two military liaison officers to convey the emperor's best wishes upon Ieyasu's move there the previous year and the rebuilding of the central keep of his castle following a fire. He presented the former shogun with a copy of a work on court ceremonial and protocol compiled by his distant forebear Kitabatake Chikafusa (né Nakanojin), a staunch supporter of the southern branch of the imperial family during the period of the Northern and Southern Courts in the fourteenth century.³⁴ As we shall see, Ieyasu formed an extremely favorable impression of Michikatsu during their discussions. No record of Michikatsu's reactions has survived; that he was able to discuss the progress of the dragon-scale scandal so "calmly" when Tokiyoshi came to call suggests both his courtier's self-control and that he had found Ieyasu a reasonable man and expected him to judge his daughter fairly and dispassionately.

In the eighth month of 1609, after GoYōzei had again pressed for the guilty to be put to death, the shogunal deputy thought it wise to begin his own thorough investigation. He interviewed all the accused: the courtiers at his official residence, the concubines at the home of Kanshūji Mitsutoyo. (Poor Hirohashi Kanekatsu, the other military liaison officer, had not been seen in public since the scandal broke and his daughter—Shin'ōsuke, one of the emperor's favorites—was dismissed.) Finally, on 8.20, Itakura himself set out for Sunpu to talk the matter over directly with Ieyasu. Two of the more experienced palace women—Sochi no Tsubone, in the service of the empress mother, and Emon no Kami, in the service of the consort—left the next day. They went as representatives of the empress mother, who wanted her son to show some mercy toward those who had offended him, and the regental families, who had failed to persuade the emperor of the need to take a more lenient line.³⁵

By the middle of the ninth month everyone had returned to the capital. The retired shogun, Itakura told Kanshūji Mitsutoyo, wished to recommend that only the two lowest-ranking men, Inokuma Noritoshi and Kaneyasu Bingo, be executed. He would prefer that the rest be punished with exile. The emperor was informed—and found that he had no choice but to abandon his intransigent posture and acquiesce. If Ieyasu was unwilling to put all of the courtiers and concubines to death, no one would. On 9.24, Mitsutoyo put the best possible face on GoYōzei's humiliating climb-down when he wrote to Itakura that the emperor commanded that the matter be left entirely to the discretion of the retired shogun.³⁶

We may presume that the Nakanoin were devastated when they heard that the five women would be banished. Of course, if the emperor had had his way, things could have been much worse. On 9.16, Michikatsu composed these two somewhat self-pitying poems:

*mono omou to
aki no nezame no
sayo shigure
oi no namida ni
okurete zo furu*

On this autumn night
awakened by my worries
a bitter shower
begins to fall—yet only
after the tears of old age.

*kono yo nite
nagaki wakare o
ima zo shiru
okure-sakidatsu
narai narademo³⁷*

Now I've come to know
even in my own lifetime
eternal parting,
though not of the usual sort:
one dying, one left behind.

He seems convinced that once his daughter is sent away, he will never see her again. Given that he had lived in exile for almost twenty years as a result of a similar transgression, this was a reasonable assumption. Shortly thereafter, on the first day of the tenth month of 1609, Nakako and her four conspirators left the capital for an indefinite period of exile.

GYŪICHI'S ACCOUNT

After a lifetime spent first in active combat, then in military administration, Ōta Gyūichi turned chronicler of the commanders he had served: he wrote a biography of Oda Nobunaga and a biography of Toyotomi

Hideyoshi, as well as an account of the Battle of Sekigahara.³⁸ Finally, in 1610, the eighty-fourth year of his life, he took up his brush one last time to record what he knew—and what he thought—about those involved in the dragon-scale scandal. *Book of Courtiers Recently in the News*, as his account is entitled, seems an unlikely subject for a warrior who belonged to an entirely different milieu. But there was something about events in the distant, perhaps even alien, world of the court that disturbed him, and he sought out someone who could tell him more. His source, he tells us, was Yōrin'in, widow of the courtier Yanagiwara Atsumitsu, who had herself escorted the young concubines into exile. Her status as an “insider” is probably why, despite Gyūichi's rhetorical extravagance—poems are quoted and comparisons drawn with earlier, illustrious exiles—his account is accurate at least as far as persons and the general chronology of events are concerned. References to divination, “the heavens,” omens, and the like may be reckoned the penumbra of unquestioned assumptions underlying his worldview.³⁹

Gyūichi began at the beginning with GoYōzei's unlucky birth, when it was “divined that he would meet with great misfortune.” Next, he cited ill omens in the form of seventeenth-century UFOs:

As for the evidence of the heavens, on the second day of the intercalary fourth month of the year [1607] . . . at the hour of the serpent [midmorning], there were two loud bursts in the city, like those of a great cannon, which echoed throughout the five home provinces. And again after night fell, three or four shining objects about a foot square in size emerged from the capital and flew off to the southwest. Again, in the following year [1608], on the third day of the tenth month, at the hour of the dog [late evening], shining objects flew about within the capital just as before and then disappeared to the southwest.

Then, Gyūichi writes, an ancient statue of Fujiwara no Kamatari, the seventh-century founder of the powerful Fujiwara clan, was discovered split down the middle. Unlike the phantom cannon and UFOs, the meaning of this particular omen was unmistakable:

At such times it was certain that something terrible would happen at the temple [where the statue was kept], or that there would be a calamity involving the Emperor. When they informed the Emperor of this, Lord

Seikanji the Controller was sent as an imperial emissary, and although prayers were offered, they were to no avail. Thereafter, the priest of the Yoshida Shrine came and offered prayers against disaster, but in spite of all this, the split did not heal.

Gyūichi remained certain that:

If divinations had been performed, and spells chanted, and some extra prayers offered, then nothing so very terrible should have happened. But owing to carelessness of some sort, a calamity of major proportions was visited upon the realm and the tumult in the palace was extraordinary.

The “calamity” visited upon the emperor—and by extension, the realm—was a sex scandal. First, however, is a generic description of the court that could only have been written by one who was not of that world:

Now for the details: since the world was in a state of tranquility and peace, all the people were irresponsible and, though there were no disturbances, due to their immaturity, moon viewings, blossom viewings, and the like were held. In the capital of flowers, noblemen and noblewomen of illustrious lineage were in court service.

Next, the rotten apples make their appearance:

Among them were Kaneyasu Bingo and his younger sister Sanuki, who served in the palace. The siblings concocted a plot and the year before last [1608], from about the second or the third month, the women’s hearts were turned away [from their affection for the Emperor] by the courtiers. Messages were exchanged and they excited one another; strange ideas got into their heads, and they disported themselves in secret. Gradually, word of this leaked out and the imperial wet nurse came to hear of it. She told the Empress Mother and the Consort. [The misbehavior] continued to escalate. Though the Empress Mother and the Consort were resigned to it, they were at a loss how they might put a stop to it. [Finally] the imperial wet nurse (she had been the Emperor’s wet nurse) told the Emperor.

Farther on in his account, Gyūichi is a bit more specific about their surreptitious goings-on:

The courtiers, with complete disregard for the academic specialties of their houses, diverted income from important court lands, oblivious to the anguish of the peasantry. With their greedy grasping they caused the farmers distress. Oblivious of the magnitude of their obligations to the Emperor, these high-ranking dwellers above the clouds failed to show proper respect for the fact that the women lived deep within the palace, and deceitfully they took them out. Having done that, they took them into rude thatched huts, and with no fear or respect for the beneficence of the heavens, they behaved just as they wished, indulging themselves to the fullest in drinking parties and revelry. They immersed themselves in sex and drink; they exchanged saké cups with no regard for the proprieties of rank or age.

Finally, the nobles' crimes are enumerated: the men are corrupt, deceitful, and devoid of respect for the world as it should be. The women are accused of leaving the palace without permission and licentious conduct. Or, in one twentieth-century scholar's bold paraphrase, going to "wild swing parties."⁴⁰

Concerning the punishment of the men, Gyūichi reports as follows:

11th month, 8th day

Item: My Lord the Colonel, son of My Lord the Ōinomikado Grand Counselor

Item: My Lord the Matsunoki Major [Nakamikado]

The aforementioned pair is banished to the island of Iōgashima in the province of Satsuma.

11th month, 10th day

Item: My Lord the Kasannoin Major is banished to the island of the Ebisu.

On this occasion, something sad occurred. His father and mother both saw him off as far as Awataguchi.* Paying no heed to the onlookers, since this would be their final parting, they raised their voices and wailed in lamentation. Their son My Lord the Major composed a poem that he left with them.

*The exit from Kyoto for those headed east.

<i>hana wa ne ni</i>	One hears that blossoms
<i>kaeru to kikeba</i>	return to their roots, and since
<i>ware mo mata</i>	I likewise am the
<i>onaji wakaba no</i>	young leaf sprung from your roots,
<i>haru o koso mate</i>	wait! For spring shall come again. ⁴¹

This he composed and sent out to them. Everyone, high and low, was deeply moved, so it is said.

Item: My Lord Asukai and My Lord Nanba are banished to the same place as that listed above.⁴²

Item: My Lord the Karasumaru Imperial Advisor

Item: My Lord the Tokudaiji Major

Taking into consideration the degree of their culpability, the two noted above were pardoned by Lord Ieyasu, Shogun in retirement.

My Lord Inokuma, who had taken flight, had an acquaintance in the Satsuma house whose assistance he begged. Bent upon crossing the seas to Korea, he went to the province of Hyūga.* As the old saying goes:

Vast though the three worlds** are,
there is no place where I might rest.
Numerous though the days are,
it is hard to get through even one.⁴³

How true! How true these words are! Although he went into hiding, his whereabouts were revealed. The lord of the domain, Takahashi Ukon, heard of this and straightaway gave orders to a certain Nakamura Tarōemon, who caught and bound him and placed him aboard a ship.

10th month, 17th day

On [this day] Inokuma arrived in the capital, so it is said. Straightaway that very evening he was sentenced and at Jōzenji in the upper reaches of the capital, he was forced to cut his belly open. Because of the ineptitude of his use of his weapon, he became the laughingstock of the capital.

Item: On the riverbank at Jōzenji, Kaneyasu Bingo-no-Kami too was bound and beheaded by untouchables. It was a pitiful sight. This Bingo

*Present-day Miyazaki Prefecture on the eastern coast of Kyushu.

**The three divisions of the realm of delusion in Buddhism: the world of desire, the world of form, and the world of formlessness.

was the greatest scoundrel in all Japan. Manipulating his younger sister My Lady Sanuki, who was in the service of—presumptuous of me though it is to mention his name—the Emperor, and concocting a scheme, he brought together the court nobles and the court ladies. He whipped them into a frenzy of illicit escapades, boasting of the imperial favor that he enjoyed; and the licentiousness of their behavior utterly defies description. . . . When the time came that the heavens brought down upon this man, the greatest scoundrel in all Japan, their inevitable punishment for incurring the detestation of the people, then the truth, quite naturally, made itself manifest; and though one may say that he brought about his own downfall, still, it is regrettable that he should have sullied the good name of his family and become the object of ridicule till the end of time.⁴⁴

Gyūichi was just as unsparing in his judgment of the women:

The bird that flies above the clouds,
High though it be, is shot down.
The fish that swims at the bottom of the sea,
Deep though it be, is hooked.
Though you lie pillow to pillow,
The heart of another is hard to know.
Though yesterday she pledged deep attachment,
Today, sadly, all that is changed.⁴⁵

On the first day of the [tenth] month, all five were sent to the Kanto and on the thirteenth day of the [tenth] month they were brought to Suruga.⁴⁶ Although eight of their serving women were sent along as far as Suruga, six then returned to the capital; two were commanded to remain with the court ladies. Perhaps because in midwinter it can be very cold, they were [sentenced] to stay on the island of Nijima and then the following spring to go on to [the more distant island of] Mikurajima.

These courtiers and court ladies of illustrious lineage had behaved willfully, just as they pleased, with no thought that this might lead to their downfall and with no fear or respect for the Way of Heaven. Proud in their glory, heedless of the derision of others, bereft of all reverence for the Three Treasures*—it was inconceivable that they should have gone on

*The “Three Treasures” of Buddhism are the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha, and the community of the enlightened.

in this way. Fearsome are the deeds of the demons of heaven! [The noble-men and women] have no cause for even so much as a dewdrop's worth or a speck of dust's worth of resentment toward the Imperial House. Since this is a punishment that they brought upon themselves, there can be no resentment of others. Just thinking of it, how it disgusts one!⁴⁷

As we see, Gyūichi's attitude to events was very different from the court's attempts to contain and control. The warrior was appalled by what the courtiers and concubines had done and did not hesitate to condemn them. And yet he maintained an attitude we might describe as respectful pity throughout. Each and every name—except for Kaneyasu Bingo, in his view “the greatest scoundrel in all Japan”—he couched in the polite form of address. He never forgot that, wicked though the courtiers had been, socially they were his superiors. Despite Gyūichi's humble origins, his bravery in battle, loyalty to his leaders, and matchless skill with bow and arrow had enabled him to mix with those in power far above his (original) station. Given this background, it is easy to understand why his account of the scandal is so conscious of the improprieties committed by the young aristocrats, and so critical of the world in which they moved. There were moral lessons to be derived from what had happened, and perhaps the opportunity to point them out was what drew him to the story in the first place.

THE FATE OF THE MEN

Modern scholarship largely bears out Gyūichi's account of the punishment of the men. In his summary, the fate of the nine was: two executed (Inokuma and Kaneyasu); two pardoned (Karasumaru and Tokudaiji); and five banished (Asukai, Kasannoin, Nakamikado, Nanba, and Ōinomikado).

Inokuma had absconded from Kyoto when he was censured by GoYōzei in 1607, and a nationwide search for him was ordered. It is only because of his involvement in the dragon-scale scandal that we know he had secretly returned to the capital before absconding again. A letter calling off the search confirms that, just as Gyūichi records, he had indeed gotten as far as Kyushu by the time he was arrested.⁴⁸

Of the five men sent into exile, three were to die without ever seeing the capital again. Ōinomikado, sent to Iōgashima (Sulphur Isle), an active volcanic island some 30 miles south of Kyushu, was the first to die, in

1613.* He was 36 years old. Asukai, sent to the island of Oki in the Sea of Japan, died next, in 1626 at the age of 42. Nakamikado, also sent to Iōgashima, survived his friend by 15 years, but he too died in exile in 1627 or 1628. He was about 50 years old. The remaining two exiles fared better. The lucky one was Asukai's younger brother Nanba, who was sent into token exile in the province of Izu and reprieved in 1612 after less than three years of rustication. Upon his return to the capital, he changed his name to Masatane and succeeded to the headship of the Asukai house. Thus successfully rehabilitated, he went on to serve as military liaison officer for more than a decade, from 1640 until his death in 1651 at the age of 65.⁴⁹ Kasannoin was dealt a more severe hand: Gyūichi records that he was sent to "the island of the Ebisu," which means that he was sent to Ezo, an old name for the northern island of Hokkaido, where the "Ebisu" or Ainu people lived. Japanese and Ainu had traded with each other for hundreds of years, and in the early seventeenth century, when the Matsumae family established a permanent settlement at Fukuyama on the south-western tip of Ezo, their exclusive trading rights were confirmed by Ieyasu. Kasannoin lived under their protection. He was still alive when in 1636 he was finally reprieved. He must have been one of life's survivors, for he lived on until 1662, dying at the ripe old age of 74.⁵⁰

For some of the men, life in exile was not all bad. A local gazetteer records that although Ōinomikado and Nakamikado were officially banished to Iōgashima, where they would presumably have spent their time mining sulphur, in fact, through the good offices of the Asukai family, they were transferred to the more hospitable island of Koshikijima, about twenty-five miles west of Kyushu. There, Ōinomikado took up with the daughter of an island samurai family, the Kajiwara, and fathered a daughter before he died. His fellow exile Nakamikado married Ōinomikado's widow and fathered a further two daughters and a son.⁵¹ Asukai, "the play-boy aristocrat," as one modern commentator has described him, transmitted the practice of kickball, his house art, to the Murakami family on the island of Oki; he also took up with a local woman and fathered at least one child. According to a latter-day descendant of the Asukai family, Kaneda Noriko, née Asukai, her ancestor Masakata's grave on Oki is something of a local tourist attraction. A deputation from the Asukai family has even

*This Iōgashima is a different island from the Iwo Jima of World War II. See map 1, Japan in 1609.

traveled to the island to gather soil from the grave for interment in the family tomb in Kyoto.⁵²

We do not know why Ieyasu pardoned Karasumaru and Tokudaiji. Perhaps it was because both had close connections with the warrior estate through their samurai wives: Karasumaru was married to a widowed daughter-in-law of Ieyasu, and Tokudaiji to a daughter of Oda Nobunaga.⁵³ Be that as it may, both men remained under imperial censure, sentenced to house arrest, for the rest of GoYōzei's reign. They did not have to endure their punishment for long. The emperor abdicated on 1611.3.27 and was succeeded by Prince Kotohito, his eldest son by Konoe Sakiko. The new Emperor GoMizuno'o and his father famously did not see eye to eye, and it is at least possible that the imperial pardons of Karasumaru and Tokudaiji on 1611.4.1, only days after GoYōzei had vacated the throne, were among the son's first attempts to distance himself from certain of his father's more controversial decisions.⁵⁴

Chapter 5

THE TALE OF KAZAN

Why did we wait for any thing?—why not seize the pleasure at once?

—JANE AUSTEN, *EMMA*

A third contemporary account of the dragon-scale scandal takes a much more sympathetic view of the participants' shenanigans than Ōta Gyūichi's rebuke. *The Tale of Kazan*, as this version of events is entitled, is a novelette named after its hero, Kasannoin Tadanaga, one of the courtiers involved.¹ (His family name, Kasannoin, is now usually pronounced Kazan'in; throughout the story he is referred to as "the Kazan Major.")² Scholars believe that it was composed at some point between the abdication of Emperor GoYōzei in 1611 and the middle of the seventeenth century. The accession of a new emperor at the end of the story is easily identified with GoMizuno'o's accession, but why the midcentury cut-off date, no one seems willing to explain.³ The writer, whoever he or she was, used the real names of the guilty, as well as those of the great and the good: Nakako appears as a character, called by her real-life title "the Acting Assistant"; the shogunal deputy Itakura Iga-no-Kami and the retired shogun Ieyasu also both appear in character, resolute and reasonable in the face of cowardice and unreason. Emperor GoYōzei is not mentioned by name, however, probably because his actions and speech are ridiculed by exaggeration. The previous emperor, Ōgimachi, stands in for

him. Despite this precaution, *The Tale of Kazan* does not seem to have circulated widely; the text was first printed in 1959 and only two manuscripts are known to be extant.⁴

The story is a clever pastiche of folktale and romance, shot through with allusions to poems from the imperially commissioned anthologies and figures from Chinese and Japanese history, as filtered through courtly tales. Most frequent are allusions to the ninth-century *Tales of Ise*, with its hero Ariwara no Narihira, Japan's greatest fictional "bad boy" lover; and to the medieval narrative *The Tale of the Heike*, which describes the rise and fall of the Taira warrior house in the twelfth century. Both seem natural choices: *Ise* tells of Narihira's several illicit relationships with imperial women, and *Heike* includes a number of stories about political exiles. If the conspirators themselves left any record of their revels, they have not survived. But here, in this literary confection, are the young courtiers and concubines as at least some of them might have wished to be depicted.

Shin'ōsuke

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This story begins at the end of a long line of more than one hundred benevolent kings, when there reigned an Emperor known as Ōgimachi. Under him the people prospered and the swords of the barbarians to the north, south, east, and west were stilled. Surpassing not only Yao and Shun, the sage kings of China in the distant past, but also more recently, our own Emperor of the Engi era,\* each of whom is said to have had twelve concubines, this Emperor had sixteen.

Among them was My Lady Shin'ōsuke, the honored daughter of Grand Counselor Hirohashi. She had entered the service of the Empress Mother at the age of nine; and as she was so fair of face, the Emperor made her one of his concubines. On one occasion, because she so sorely missed her parents, the Emperor deigned to grant her leave. Saying that she meant to go to the home of her father, the Grand Counselor, she boarded her palanquin and hurried on her way—whereupon a gust of wind blew aside the blind of her palanquin.

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\*That is, Emperor Daigo (885–930, r. 897–930). The Engi era is the period 901–923.

Just then, one Kazan, a Major in the Palace Guards, with his friends Asukai and Nanba, happened to be passing by. Catching a glimpse of My Lady Shin'ōsuke, they marveled at the fairness of her visage and despaired that they should never see her “but from far away,”<sup>5</sup> like the white snows atop Mount Takama. They joined hands in amazement, wondering whether perhaps they had found the Kalavinka bird of paradise. At the same time, as the winds of their passion rose, the intensity of their feelings was revealed, “like dew on the underside of arrowroot leaves”;<sup>6</sup> “neither waking nor yet asleep,”<sup>7</sup> their thoughts turned back to ancient times, when two brave young men, stalwart of heart, fought over the maiden Unai.<sup>8</sup>

Seeking to make contact with her, Kazan appealed to the Shirakawa Empress Mother, whereupon Asukai waylaid the Katsura Consort in order to make his appeal.\* They were like Mount Asama and Mount Fuji, two volcanoes vying with each other to see which could make the most smoke. But because she was so young and green, this caused My Lady Shin'ōsuke considerable anguish. The young men, quite unaware of the distress they had caused her once word of their inquiries got out, were only the more curious (this being the way of such men) and longed for her all the more. Myriad as the grains of sand on the strand were their efforts, and at long last her heart began to incline toward them.

It was about that time that the two enlisted the aid of Kaneyasu Bingo. “We’ve just made a new acquaintance,” they told him. “You wouldn’t mind doing us a favor, would you?” And they had someone ask My Lady Shin'ōsuke, “Won’t you meet us at Kaneyasu’s place?”

One time, when the Emperor seemed in a good mood, she cozied up to him and, setting his mind at ease, she said, “Since my parents are still not well, might I, just for the last day of the month . . . ?”

“Permission granted,” he decreed. And getting herself up in brightly colored silks, she went not to her father, Hirohashi, but—as previously arranged—she betook herself instead to the shabby lodgings of Kaneyasu. Or so it is said.

The Kazan Major and Nanba too were waiting anxiously as she came to them in secret. She was so demurely winsome, despite the sudden boldness of it all, that not even a heavenly maiden could have equaled her charms, they felt. The saké went round and round, and then they pushed

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\*The “Shirakawa Empress Mother” is a disguised reference to Emperor GoYōzei’s mother Kanshūji Hareko; the “Katsura Consort” refers to GoYōzei’s Consort Konoe Sakiko.

their pillows together for this the first of their assignments. Like inseparable mandarin ducks, like the intertwined branches of pine, they swore by all the gods their affection for one another. When the bell in the tower tolled the end of their night of trysting, and shortly thereafter the birds began to sing, much remained that they still wished to say. Full of regret they parted, untangling their sleeves one from another. The concubine returned to the palace, and the two men went their separate ways and returned home. Surely no one who was not right by their bedside could know of this dalliance, they imagined—yet, from a deeply confidential source, the Inokuma Chamberlain got wind of it.

### The Meeting at Ōinomikado's

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In the meantime the Chamberlain gathered the young courtiers together at the home of the Ōinomikado Colonel.<sup>9</sup> Present were Tokudaiji, Karasumaru, Matsunoki, Asukai, and Bingo, and they talked through the night. In the midst of their merrymaking, the Inokuma Chamberlain enlivened the conversation when he announced:

“Recently My Lord the Kazan Major seduced My Lady Shin’ōsuke! There was I, thinking that no one could beat me at *that* art, when I was overtaken by My Lord the Major and left in the shade. That *he* should seduce *this* lady—in all my life I’ve never felt like such a failure. If you feel the same as I do, well, just leave the rest to me!”

Egged on by Inokuma, all those in the room were led astray by the same dark desires.

“Among the sixteen concubines, there are five with whom we’ve some connection—”

“But one of them has already been taken by My Lord the Kazan Major! That leaves only four.”

“And which ladies are they?”

Inokuma replied: “My Lord Yasoku’s daughter the Acting Assistant, who’s twenty; My Lord Minase’s daughter, the Naka Palace Attendant, who’s sixteen; Kaneyasu’s daughter Lady Sanuki, who’s eighteen; and My Lord Karahashi’s daughter, the Kan Palace Attendant, who’s eighteen.”

“Even the moon must be jealous of their beauty!”

“And the blossoms too must resent them!”

The young men in the room listened with bated breath to Inokuma’s tale.

"First of all," he said, "I'll make plans with my contact." This set them all abuzz, even though they hadn't yet laid eyes on any of the concubines.

"I want the Acting Assistant!" cried one.

"The Naka Palace Attendant for me!" cried another.

And thus they vied with one another, quite oblivious to the fact that they should never have been entertaining such thoughts. Then Inokuma spoke up.

"Let's leave that problem for later. There are seven of us, and only four Palace Attendants. That makes two of us to one of them. The one left over we'll draw lots for; the winner gets her to himself."

And so they drew lots. Karasumaru and Matsunoki drew the Naka Palace Attendant; Tokudaiji and Kaneyasu drew the Kan Palace Attendant; the Asukai Major and the Inokuma Chamberlain drew the Acting Assistant; and My Lord the Ōinomikado Colonel drew Lady Sanuki.

"Oh, we're jealous of you, Colonel," they cried, "one woman all to yourself!"

That being settled, Inokuma wrote letters to each of the four ladies, signing only his own name, and sent them off—and touching letters they were.

One day when the four concubines were at leisure they gathered and fell eagerly to talking. Among them was Lady Sanuki, who regaled them with all sorts of amusing gossip. Then she said:

"There's something I want to tell you about, if you don't mind."

Like ice melting in springtime, the other ladies pricked up their ears when they heard this.

"Go on!"

"Tell us!"

"I've got a story to tell too!"

"A little while ago," Lady Sanuki said, "I had a letter from Inokuma," and from the sleeve of her robe, she brought it out. Whereupon all the other concubines, each striving to be first, reached into their sleeves and took out their letters.

"Whether it's true or not I don't know, but a few years ago, when thirty-six of the rowdiest young men in the land were banished, Inokuma was among them."<sup>10</sup>

"Indeed he was, but he didn't go away with the others. He begged his father-in-law, Yoshida Bungo, to hide him, and he lay low in a village called Kotsuma, near Sumiyoshi in the province of Settsu."

"And now, it seems, he's come back up to the capital."



A serving woman called Midori who was with them butted in and said:

"I've heard that even the official histories of Cathay aren't entirely true, but although you may think this nonsensical, day and night, morning and evening, kabuki dancers are coming and going from each and every one of the ladies' apartments in the palace. If you were to disguise yourselves to look like them and leave under the cover of evening dusk, who would be any the wiser?" And on she went, prattling to her heart's content. The women heard her out and then said:

"Yes, yes, she's right, it might just work!"

And each and every one of them sent off letters dark with ink.

"Well then," said Inokuma, preening himself as he revealed this to the other six, who were all deeply impressed. Whereupon he sent word to the ladies that they were to gather at Bingo's place.

As the concubines anxiously awaited the end of the day, they boldly cut off their full-length hair at the waist and arranged it in the *fukikaeshi* style, sidelocks swept back into a round puff at the back of the head. Under cover of the departure of the kabuki dancers, they slipped out at dusk. They were thought to be real kabuki dancers, and no one suspected them.

All gathered at Kaneyasu's place, where they disported themselves in a myriad of most inventive ways. Then, as the evening grew late, they pushed their pillows together and each of them paired up with the partners whose names they had drawn. Never in their wildest dreams had they expected fate to grant them such a chance. Nor, they thought, would they ever have another opportunity to enjoy themselves like this; and the love they made went deeper than the deepest sea.

As dawn approached, they wrung out the damp sleeves of their robes as they parted. "By all the gods, we shall do this again!" they swore, as they bid each other farewell and the ladies returned to the palace. There they changed their robes and attached full-length switches to their hair, carefully covering the join with a decorative paper tie. And with the stylish elegance of the way they wore their overkimono—thrown back from the shoulders and tied at the hips—it was no wonder His Majesty suspected nothing.

Yet, strange to say, word did leak out, and the Emperor came to hear of it. How so, you ask? It was, some said, through the matter of kickball licensing.

## The Asukai License

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Which is to say that, although since time immemorial the Asukai house had been recognized as the masters of kickball, in recent years opinion had been divided, some saying that the Matsunoshita were superior, and others insisting that the Asukai were superior. But when it became known that the Matsunoshita had been appointed teachers to His Majesty, everyone, down to the lowest of the low, was obtaining licenses from the Matsunoshita, while the Asukai were issuing licenses to no one.

The Asukai were of the opinion that *they* ought to be the ones receiving special patronage at the palace, and they hastened to Suruga to lodge an appeal. The Matsunoshita too left the capital and went down to Suruga, to argue that they were entitled to precedence.

The Shogun listened to them and said: "Which one of you is heir to the kickball lineage?"

"As a rule," said Asukai, "among the court nobility there should never be two premier houses in any one art. Nor should there be two masters at court issuing kickball licenses. Those issued by the Matsunoshita are quite without precedent," he said, speaking his mind directly.

## The Matsunoshita Appeal

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Whereupon Matsunoshita, being a glib wordsmith, made bold to dismiss Asukai's complaint. . . .<sup>11</sup>

"Ever since Jinmu established his capital in Tsukushi,\* all the way down to the present day, the imperial will has carried great weight. In ages past, when commanded by imperial decree, even dead trees would burst forth in flower, and evil gods and demons trembled with fear. Humbly I would remind you: permission to issue licenses was granted to the Matsunoshita by decree of the Emperor, of whom there are no two in this land."

The Shogun listened to this and thought: *The Asukai have always been known as the house of kickball, but now it seems that this disagreeable*

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<sup>11</sup>Jinmu is the mythical first emperor of Japan. The traditional dates of his reign are 660–585 B.C. Tsukushi is an old word for Kyushu.

*Matsunoshita has been appointed teacher to the Emperor. For so skilled a practitioner to pour scorn on the Asukai certainly does not redound to the credit of his house.*

"As the appointed house since ages past," he said, "let the Asukai issue licenses. The Matsunoshita, I understand, by virtue of their high reputé as skilled kickballers, have been appointed teachers to the Emperor. From today forward, as Shogun I too appoint Matsunoshita my teacher. To all those within the palace and without I would say: should you be desirous of attaining skills in kickball, learn from the Matsunoshita!" Thus he rendered his judgment, based on their respective abilities, and fair it was to both parties.

Nevertheless, there were those of high rank at court who maintained that, as far as issuing licenses was concerned, the Asukai had won and the Matsunoshita had lost. The resentment the Matsunoshita felt was profound. They now pinned their hopes on the possibility that something scandalous might occur within the Asukai house.

At that time Matsunoshita had a beautiful daughter who was in service at the palace. The Emperor's fondness for her was extraordinary. One day, what should she see but those kabuki concubines gathered together, chattering about something and occasionally bursting into fits of giggles. Thinking this strange, Lady Matsunoshita crept close and pressed her ear to the screen that separated them. They seemed to be gossiping about Asukai and Inokuma. Though Lady Matsunoshita was very young, she knew that Asukai was her father's enemy. She pressed closer and strained to hear what they were saying. But they were gossiping in whispers and she could not make it out.

It was the first of the seventh month and the Star Festival was approaching. The Emperor invited the nobles to attend a party at the Seiryōden in the palace.

## The Second Prince Finds a Letter

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At this party, the Second Prince, a boy of twelve, chanced upon one of Inokuma's prized epistles. Thinking there would be little point in taking it to the Empress Mother or the Consort, he gave it instead to the Emperor. The dwellers above the clouds looked on in horror as the imperial countenance was transformed. What might be the matter? they wondered in alarm.

Afterward, the Emperor opened the letter and perused it. He recognized Inokuma's hand. But the letter was not addressed; what was he to do? He was worried and upset. Perhaps if he were to question his sixteen women carefully, one by one, he would discover who was guilty.

First of all, he questioned Lady Matsunoshita severely.

"Inokuma?" She was mystified. "I've never heard of him. I've never seen him. And in any case, 'a worthy woman does not have two husbands'—what a dreadful thing to be asked!"<sup>12</sup>

"Quite so. That is quite so," said the Emperor as he regarded her. "But have you never seen any suspicious goings-on among the women serving at the palace?"

Lady Matsunoshita thought for a moment and then said, "When was it now? Some of those ladies had gathered and were whispering among themselves, and when I crept close to listen, they were gossiping about an Asukai and an Inokuma. I was afraid of the wrath of heaven, such horrifying things I heard, that when I got back I washed out my ears! But I don't know any of the details."

*Well then*, thought the Emperor; and he summoned each and every one of his ladies. In a better humor than usual, he amused them with picture contests and the like, and while they were thus distracted, he had the five ladies' personal possessions searched. Just as he had suspected, there were incriminating letters, stacks of them, and their kabuki costumes as well, pulled from their clothing chests. It was no use protesting their innocence; for each and every one of them, it was all over.

The Emperor sent a report on the matter to Itakura. Most respectfully, Itakura summoned the seven ranking noblemen and questioned them.

"Utterly impossible!" they said, vying with one another to deny the charge.

"That may be so," Itakura allowed. "It is the way of the world that people lie. Well then, let me question the concubines and find out what is behind their statements." With that, he left the room.

### Itakura Calls at the Palace

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Thereafter Itakura called at the palace and summoned My Lady Shin'osuke and the Kan Palace Attendant. They came into the Black Door Room,<sup>13</sup> past a folding screen, looking dejected and miserable. Face to face with

this fearsome warrior from the east, it was hardly surprising that the two palace ladies had nothing whatsoever to say.

“Well, what’s been going on?” he demanded to know. But just as spring flowers wilt and their color and scent fade away, all the ladies could do was press the sleeves of their robes to their faces. Itakura himself was not made of stone or wood. Wiping away the tears that spilled down his cheeks, he dismissed them.

All the while the Emperor sent messenger after messenger to Itakura, saying, “Off with their heads! Now! I want them exposed!”

Most respectfully, Itakura demurred, saying, “I’m sorry, but I’m unable to comply on my own authority.” He lost no time departing for Suruga.

### Iga Travels to Suruga

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Itakura went down to Suruga and informed [Ieyasu] of the foregoing. The Shogun heard him out and asked, “What do you think we should do, Iga?”

Most respectfully, Itakura said: “The Emperor has made his wishes clear, but there are not just one or two who are guilty. If we were to enforce so harsh a sentence and put them all to death, the entire court would bewail their fate; and what’s worse, you would be ridiculed by every wise guy in Kyoto. ‘The barbarian-quelling Shogun?’ they would say. ‘He’s the guy who kills the Emperor’s concubines.’ Your future reputation is at stake. Even though he is the Emperor, you’ve got to calm His Majesty down; convince him he oughtn’t to be so perverse!”

The Shogun heard him out and said: “I take your point. But if all we do is make them plead for mercy, in one way or another that will only make the Emperor angrier. That being the case, Inokuma and Kaneyasu, as the two ringleaders, shall be executed in the capital as a warning to others. The concubines shall be banished to the island of Hirugashima in the province of Sagami. The court nobles shall be banished to the island of Kikaigashima in the province of Satsuma.”<sup>14</sup>

Appeased in these several ways—and powerless to do otherwise—the Emperor relented.

Inokuma was unable to rest easy. He absconded to the province of Hyūga and hid in a village called Agata,<sup>15</sup> but he was captured alive by the local authorities and returned to the capital.

Itakura regarded him. "Of all the shameless things! You thought that if you ran away, we would let you escape. But, alas, you have been captured and brought back. Now I'll see that you end up as dirt beneath the wormwood!"

### The Palace Women Are Banished to Sagami

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It was about this time that the concubines were preparing for their journey to the little island of their exile. They cut off their hair as if they were nuns. On the day of their departure, the tenth of the tenth month, their fathers and mothers, their nurses, and even their servants, thinking this might be the last they would ever see of them, wept tears that fell like rain such as the heavens have never known.

As the day approached, Itakura respectfully informed the Emperor that there was certain to be a crowd of gawkers at Awataguchi as soon as dawn broke. "It might prove unseemly," he suggested, "and I would prefer that they leave the capital in the middle of the night."

But the Emperor ordered that they leave at midday. And so the women were bundled into five palanquins made of wicker, and they were not even allowed to cover their heads with sedge hats.

Itakura was appalled. "The Emperor has gone too far. Even though they did bring this upon themselves, until now they have dwelled within the golden halls of the palace, and their bodies have been clothed in jeweled robes. We must at least wrap their palanquins in oiled paper and shield them from view." And he had their palanquins wrapped all around with oiled paper. His compassion allowed them to leave the capital without being seen, for which they were glad—though how pitiable was their joy!

At this point, our author, who so far has told his or her story in relatively unadorned prose, rises to a sort of poetic cadenza, a lyrical travelogue couched in couplets of five and seven syllables. Such passages presume a reader who can supply from memory the poems, tales, or historical events that are alluded to. In the following cadenza, the author displays his or her rhetorical virtuosity and knowledge of the poetic tradition; at the same time, the various allusions serve to evoke the emotions that a seventeenth-century audience expected the concubines to feel en route to their island exile.

Such is their distress, such their anguish—does even the cockerel at Meeting Slope cry in sympathy?<sup>16</sup>

And the boats that are rowed on the Sea of Grebes—do they too burn with longing?<sup>17</sup>

Then on they go to Mirror Mountain, which reflects their altered visages;<sup>18</sup>

And past that narrow road to Ono, where once a banished Prince wept;<sup>19</sup>

And then the ruins of the old barrier gate at Fuwa, where *they* certainly would not forget the old capital.<sup>20</sup>

Braving the perilous passage over Mount Sayononakayama, wondering why they had been so foolish;<sup>21</sup>

Finally reaching the province of their destination, they ford the River Ōi, as broad as are great their sins and the punishment they shall suffer; its waves, like their tears, leaving them desolate.<sup>22</sup>

They make their way over the steep pass at Mount Utsu; and as they follow that shrouded road, overgrown with vines, they meet a traveling peddler who tells them that Inokuma and Kaneyasu have been put to death in the capital, and that the remaining courtiers will be banished to the Kikaigashima in the province of Satsuma.<sup>23</sup>

Hearing this, the court ladies realize there is no hope whatever for themselves; and so on and on they go, until finally they arrive at a boundless expanse of sand.



They would be sent into exile from this shore to Hirugashima, they were told, but for the time being they might rest and recover from the journey. Meanwhile boats were prepared for them by the fishermen. The women's silken robes were taken from them and they were clothed in garments of hemp and given sedge hats.

And so they were rowed out to sea. The corrupt official and his henchman, thinking to enrich themselves, said, "Look now! There are a lot of people who depend on us. How about you showing a little consideration?" Which only set them weeping tears as unending as a string of jewels.

And so they were landed on the little island of Hirugashima. The boats that had brought them there were rowed back. "The only skies we have known are over there!" they cried, gazing longingly at the departing boats,

as their hearts went out across the waves. Even the unfeeling rowers, out of pity, stayed their oars. Yet as the boats disappeared into the distance, there was nothing the women could do but wring out the soaked skirts of their kimono.

They climbed to the top of the hill and found that there was not another soul on the island. Their only companions were the roar of the waves breaking against the rocky shore, the plovers at the water's edge, and the flocks of seagulls. It rained steadily, and they took shelter beneath one of the trees that grew in great proliferation. "This must be what is meant when they say 'sheltering under the same tree is the result of a bond from a previous life!'"<sup>24</sup> they said, weeping, their tears vying with the rain. The days were painful, the nights miserable.

There was an old fox that lived on the island. He took pity on them and, deciding that he would make the concubines a brushwood hut, he collected dead branches, hemp, and pliable vines of wisteria and willow and wove them together. Then he brought leaves, dried them out, and made for them a place where they could sleep undisturbed. Then, tugging at the skirts of their hempen garments, he led the concubines through the door. In times past, even a tiger one had raised from a cub could not be trusted, but there was nothing to fear from this old fox, and they lived peacefully together.

### Inokuma Meets His End

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Meanwhile, back in the capital, Inokuma and Kaneyasu had been sentenced to execution. On the seventeenth of the tenth month, in the middle of the night, Inokuma was bundled into a wicker palanquin and carried to Jōzenji, a temple on First Avenue with which he had long been affiliated.

The holy man there came out, intending to administer the Last Ten Chants, but when he found it was the notorious Inokuma come to meet his end, he felt that it would be improper to grant him these.<sup>25</sup>

Inokuma cowered and squirmed in his palanquin.

"This is it, My Lord!" they cried out to him, but he refused to emerge, as if he were hiding under "the pine of Akoya."<sup>26</sup> His guards shouted into his palanquin:

"So this is the famous Inokuma! The swell to end all swells!"



"He's anything but, now that his honorable end is in sight!"

"Out with you! And be quick with it!"

Still Inokuma cowered deep in his palanquin. Then the warriors unsheathed their halberds and began thrusting them through the gaps in the wicker. Terrified, Inokuma finally lurched out. They found this craven exit so ignominious that they cut him down on the spot.

The holy man took the body and cremated it. There was none who did not laugh at the way Inokuma met his end.

### The Death of Kaneyasu

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Kaneyasu too roared with laughter when he saw how Inokuma met his end.

"Such is the way of this ephemeral world; nothing surprising about that. I should have liked to bid you all farewell here in these temple grounds, but since my youth I have been an adherent of the Lotus sect. This temple is of different origins. Given that the temple to which I am pledged is located some distance from here, I should prefer to meet my end on the bank of the river behind the temple."

"Get a move on, then!" said his guards, dragging him away and sitting him down on the bank of the Kamo River behind the Jōzenji.

Kaneyasu said, "In ancient China, when Han Xin was put to death at the Palace of Eternal Joy because he had been slandered by the Empress Lü, he smiled happily as he died, declaring, 'Whether the Empress loves me or hates me—it's all one to me.'<sup>27</sup> He was content to meet his end despised by the Empress; so how should I, Kaneyasu, who was deeply beloved of the concubines, begrudge this life of mine that is about to end?" But thinking, *Enough of these meretricious sentiments*, he took his leave of the warriors, chanting, "If there are those who hear the Law, then not a one will fail to attain buddhahood,"<sup>28</sup> and at the age of twenty-two he vanished as foam upon the Kamo River. There was none who did not admire the way Kaneyasu met his end.

### The Exiles in Satsuma

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It was sometime later that the seven noblemen were placed in wicker palanquins and, on the night of the second of the eleventh month, sent

out from the capital. My Lord the Kazan Major, from within his palanquin, called out:

“You guardsmen! Listen carefully to me! In times past, during the Juei disturbances, Emperor Antoku perished in Kyushu. *That* was in the service of safeguarding the land.<sup>29</sup> For *this*, there is no precedent! But be that as it may, we are powerless to do anything about it.”

And before long they arrived at the quayside in Ōe.<sup>30</sup>

Here again the journey into exile is couched in the form of a poetic travelogue. This one, though not as richly allusive as is the women’s, takes the men from embarkation in Osaka, via poetic topoi associated with the Inland Sea and the west coast of Kyushu, to exile on Iōgashima (Sulphur Isle), also referred to in the tale as Kikaigashima. As we saw in the previous chapter, two of the guilty noblemen—Ōinomikado and Nakamikado—were actually banished to this island.

They sail past the Isle of Awaji, the very name of which reminds them that they shall never see their loves again.<sup>31</sup>

Then, once they traverse Thunder Coast,<sup>32</sup>

There! It comes into view—the old barrier gate at Moji, that lonely ruin in far-away Tsukushi;<sup>33</sup>

Then Kashiwa and Hakozaiki, they see but from afar;<sup>34</sup>

And the Matsura shore—can it be but a mirage?<sup>35</sup>

Finally, at that famed place in the province of Satsuma,

At Sulphur Isle they arrive.



“This is your island!” they were told.

The boatmen, thinking that when the ship departed, the nobles would try to get back aboard, out of pity prevented this by escorting them ashore. When the boatmen made ready to return to the ship, they could not bear to look back. The seven noblemen joined hands and headed away from the shore into the mountains.

“I trust you’ll not end up like Shunkan, the Prelate of old!” cried the helmsman of the ship.<sup>36</sup>

As they headed into the mountains, gathering leaves as they went, the nobles likened themselves to “those shrimp said to dwell in seaweed harvested by fisherfolk, who have brought upon themselves their own ruin.”<sup>37</sup>

## Fishing Rod Adrift

---

One day, the Kazan Major found a stalk of bamboo and picked it up. He would make a fishing rod of it, he decided, and under the heading “The Exiles of Kikaigashima,” he carved into the bamboo the names of the seven exiles and this poem:

|                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>sode ni fuke</i>     | Sea breeze that wafts o’er    |
| <i>shiotare koromo</i>  | waves from Hirugashima,       |
| <i>hosu mo ushi</i>     | blow upon these sleeves!      |
| <i>Hirugashima yori</i> | So as to dry these our robes, |
| <i>kayou ura kaze</i>   | perpetually brine-soaked.     |

Having carved this into the bamboo, on calm days he would go down to the shore and cast out his fishing line. But one day a wave rose up without warning and washed his fishing rod far out into the offing. Dejected, the Major trudged back to the mountains.

This fishing rod, blown by the wind, eventually found its way to Tago on Suruga Bay. There, at long last, it floated up to an old fisherman, who took it into his boat. Whereupon an unseasonable storm blew down from Mount Fuji and he was swept out to sea some ten thousand leagues or more. For ten days he saw no land, until on the twelfth day he was blown ashore on Hirugashima in the province of Sagami.

The palace women saw this and, astonished at the sight of another person, they went down to the shore, where they found a white-haired old man.

“Pray old man! Hear our plea! Take us back to the mainland and leave us there!”

The old man listened to them and said, “You are to be pitied, but I fear the wrath of His Highness!”

He made haste to push off. The women followed him into the water, soaking their sleeves. “Boatman! Oh boatman!” they cried. But he could not bring himself to take pity on them, and in his haste to leave he dropped the fishing rod upon the beach.

“This looks like bamboo from home!” they cried.

They gazed upon it fondly and then picked it up. And lo and behold, “These are the traces of Kazan’s hand!”

They gathered around and examined it. A poem about Hirugashima and the names of the seven “exiles of Kikaigashima” were clearly to be seen.

“Does this mean that that old fisherman was our guardian deity?”

“And his visit was a dream?”

“But if it is a dream, what is to become of us when we awaken?” they asked, bewailing their misfortune.<sup>38</sup>

### The Acting Assistant's Lament

---

This brought tears to the eyes of the Acting Assistant. What might she have recalled that made her so dejected and downhearted?

“A foolish question! Gladdened I am to receive word of My Lord the Asukai Major. But how painful to recall that Inokuma has already departed this life.<sup>39</sup> From which world should I await news of him? I once pledged myself to him in both this world and the next—but such is life that one or the other always dies first. If we had lived on together, would we now understand the words of this poem?<sup>40</sup>

By mistake we entered the immortals' hut  
And were their guests for but half a day;  
Yet when we returned to our old village  
We met our grandchildren in the seventh generation.”

She piled up sand to make a stupa, offered flowers, and anointed it with water. Then she chanted, “Hail to Inokuma the Enlightened One!”

### The Kan Palace Attendant Chants Memorial Rites

---

At the same time, the lamentations of the Kan Palace Attendant too were pitiful to hear. Seeing this message from Tokudaiji called to her mind ever more vividly the example of the fate of Li Ling of the Han.<sup>41</sup>

Kaneyasu was no longer of this vale of tears. Since now it was only in dreams that she could see him, on seed-dark nights she would doze off full of longing for him, and then as the sound of the mountain wind filled her ears she would wake with a start. “Oh! Kaneyasu!” she would cry out. And her thoughts would fill with the feelings expressed in the poem:

Unaware that it was but the bamboo  
outside the window,  
she would start with fright  
whenever the night wind blew.<sup>42</sup>

As dawn revealed the clouds stretched out across the sky, she did not doubt that he would become a buddha.

“Attain the far shore! Hail to Kaneyasu the Enlightened One!” she chanted, dedicating the merit of her prayer to him.

### A New Emperor Ascends the Throne

---

Thereafter, the Emperor moved to his retirement palace and a new Emperor ascended the throne; above the clouds, at the imperial court, it seemed the dawning of a new era.

The new Emperor proclaimed: “Though my father the Emperor was severe, I for my part should like to put all of that behind Us. I decree that the descendants and relatives of the exiles be recalled to duty and treated favorably. Moreover, since all things are the result of bonds forged in a previous life, rather than weep over a past that will never return—”

This imperial proclamation brought tears of gratitude to the eyes of everyone present, and the new Emperor too dampened the sleeves of his robe, while the ranking courtiers, one and all, moistened their sleeves as with dewdrops.

They celebrated the excellence of the new Emperor with the wish that he might reign for a thousand—nay—ten thousand years. So long-lasting was the joy that prevailed in the capital, that as time passed and the year came to an end, they were still chanting, “The waves of the four seas are calmed. May he reign for ten thousand years! Let it be proclaimed from the mountaintops!”

### TRUTH AND FICTION IN *THE TALE OF KAZAN*

So ends *The Tale of Kazan*: a new emperor is enthroned, and it is a sign of his mercy and wisdom that the descendants and relatives of the exiles—though not the exiles themselves—are immediately forgiven, all to general rejoicing. The threat to imperial authority posed by the disloyal young

courtiers and concubines has been contained by their execution or expulsion from the capital; from now on, harmony will reign.

Whatever truth there may be in the tale, and there is probably some—in the concubines' ruse of disguising themselves as kabuki dancers in order to leave the imperial palace undetected; in the descriptions of the emperor's demented rage and Ieyasu's discussion of strategy with Itakura; perhaps even in the accounts of the deaths of Inokuma and Kaneyasu—once the women and the surviving men leave the capital, clearly we are in the realm of romance. The kindly old fox that builds a hut for the concubines to shelter in, the fishing rod engraved with a poem that is magically swept hundreds of miles from an island south of Kyushu to end up in the fisherman's boat, the undying love felt by the concubines for the young courtiers—all these details satisfy fictional imperatives.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the depiction of the concubines in *The Tale of Kazan* is that their presumed cultural literacy is emphasized by the author, who has them quoting freely from Chinese history as well as Japanese literature. In the scenes depicting the women's laments for the executed Inokuma and Kaneyasu, for example, both quote Chinese-style poems from the eleventh-century *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing* anthology. (*Those court ladies really know their poetry!*) But the notion that "the Acting Assistant"—in life Nakanoin Nakako—pined endlessly for Inokuma, depicted here as the most cynical and manipulative of all the courtiers, is entirely conventional; we cannot extract anything approaching "truth" from that part of the story. I do not wish to deny the "real" Nakako her youthful indiscretion, the passion she may have felt for one (or more) of the young men to whom she abandoned herself. The prospect of relief—release, even—from her duties as imperial concubine must have been enticing enough to tempt her out of the palace and off to the orgiastic parties and outdoor performances of kabuki dancing that she and the other concubines were guilty of attending. Her devotion to Inokuma in *The Tale of Kazan*, however, is about him, not her, and is surely designed to emphasize his irresistibility to women. (*Even the Emperor's women fell for him!*) Just as poetry from *Tales of Ise* provides numerous allusive possibilities for the author of *Kazan*, the figure of Ariwara no Narihira, the hero of *Ise* and illicit lover of more than one imperial woman, hovers behind Inokuma.<sup>43</sup>

The story of what really happened to Nakako after she was sent into exile is stranger and only slightly less fantastic than the fiction.



The Izu Peninsula in 1609

# Chapter 6

## SHIPWRECK

|                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>ushi tsurashi to</i>  | In grief and sadness         |
| <i>hibi wo nagekishi</i> | I mourn the days             |
| <i>miyazukae</i>         | when I served at court.      |
| <i>tsubasa no araba</i>  | Had I wings,                 |
| <i>ima kaerinan</i>      | I'd now return. <sup>1</sup> |

—ABBESS KASANOIN JIKUN, IN *IRIS FIELDS*



On the evening of the first day of the tenth month of 1609, one of the still-serving palace attendants knelt down in the duty room to record this, the final reference to the dragon-scale scandal in the *Daily Records*:

Rain, clearing in the evening. In the morning, His Majesty had his saké, but he did not have his morning meal, because there was no one to serve it. In the evening, he had his customary three cups of saké. As for those women who have lately behaved so badly, word came from the Shogun that “whatever is to be done with them, we shall handle it here.” Today, each and every one of them departed for Suruga.<sup>2</sup>

An air of gloom hovers about this entry. Partly it is the weather, perfectly matched to the day’s events. And partly it is the obvious isolation of the emperor, alone in the palace during the day with no women to serve him his meal. By the evening they were back on duty and he got his saké; the unfaithful concubines had left the capital, and for the women who remained, the scandal was over. At the very end of the year, they welcomed two new recruits to the bureau: a young woman from the Gojō family and a girl from the Nakanomikado family who was still too young to have her



hair pulled back into the long ponytail that was the palace attendant's working hairstyle.<sup>3</sup>

## TO SUNPU

As far as the town of Sunpu (present-day Shizuoka City), capital of the province of Suruga, where former Shogun Ieyasu lived in retirement, the women traveled in a largish party. They were accompanied by personal servants and chaperoned by the older woman Yōrin'in, widow of the Yanagiwara Grand Counselor. Presumably the women also had a military escort, more to protect them from the depredations of bandits, one imagines, than to prevent them from absconding—for where could a former imperial concubine have run to? There was safety in numbers.

The author of *The Tale of Kazan* has them carried off to exile in wicker palanquins—a humiliating form of display that seems quite unlikely in the Japan of 1609, since palanquins require expensive teams of bearers who must be changed at regular intervals en route. The women may well have been transported in palanquins from their homes to Awataguchi, the exit from Kyoto to the Eastern Sea Road, just as *The Tale of Kazan* describes; thereafter, surely they walked like (almost) everyone else. Just four years later, when in 1613 the Englishman Captain John Saris traveled the same road, he was deeply impressed by what he saw:

The way for the most part is wonderfull even, and where it meeteth with Mountains passage is cut through. This way is the mayne Roade of all this Countrey, and is for the most part sandie and gravell: it is divided into leagues, and at every leagues end are two small hills, viz. on either side of the way one, and upon every one of them a faire Pine-tree trimmed round in fashion of an Arbor. These markes are placed upon the way to the end, that the Hacknie men, and those which let out Horses to hire, should not make men pay more [than] their due, which is about three pence a league. The Roade is exceedingly travelled, full of people.<sup>4</sup>

By “leagues” Saris means *ri*, a distance of just under two-and-a-half miles. Stations on Japan's major roads were positioned about three *ri*, seven-and-a-half miles, apart. A fit and unencumbered man moving briskly could cover that distance in about two hours, but a more reasonable pace would

be about one *ri* per hour.<sup>5</sup> The distance between Kyoto and Sunpu was roughly 60 *ri* or about 146 miles, and we know that the party of women covered that distance in 11 days, an average of just over 13 miles per day.

The shock of being parted from his daughter inspired in Michikatsu an outpouring of two dozen deeply felt and sometimes angry poems, all of which appear in his personal poetry collection.<sup>6</sup>

Thirtieth day, same [ninth] month, the day they say [she is to leave] on the morrow:

|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>omoiyare</i>         | Only think of it!           |
| <i>nagakarumajiki</i>   | As old as I am and          |
| <i>oi ga mi no</i>      | so little of life left;     |
| <i>kagiri mo matanu</i> | yet before that span is run |
| <i>kono wakareji wo</i> | we go our separate ways.    |

[Ten]th month, first day, the day she departs the capital:

|                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>hare kumoru</i>        | Now fair, now clouded                 |
| <i>sora o narai no</i>    | as is the wont of                     |
| <i>kaminazuki</i>         | the godless month;                    |
| <i>sode wa shigure no</i> | the chill rain of tears that soaks my |
|                           | sleeves                               |
| <i>taenu fuyu kana</i>    | a never-ending winter.                |

*Kaminazuki*, translated here as “the godless month,” refers to the lunar tenth month, the first of the three winter months. A traditional etymology explains that the name came about because Japan’s myriad gods all gathered at the Izumo Grand Shrine in the tenth month, leaving their usual abodes “godless.”<sup>7</sup> In Michikatsu’s poem, “the godless month” evokes not only the weather typical of early winter but also his sense that Nakako’s departure leaves him completely bereft.

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>kotowari no</i>       | Could even the             |
| <i>nagaki wakare mo</i>  | expected eternal parting   |
| <i>nani narazu</i>       | compare with this?         |
| <i>kono yo ni kakaru</i> | I wonder at such a moment  |
| <i>ima o omoeba</i>      | coming in my own lifetime. |

How is it, Michikatsu wonders, that he is still alive when his daughter is gone? Could death (*nagaki wakare*, “eternal parting”) be worse than this death in life without her?

*kanashisa o  
tare ni towamashi  
ko o omou  
oya no kokoro wa  
oya zo shiriken*

*uki koto o  
ukiyo no tsune to  
iinasu wa  
tada yo no naka no  
yo no tsune no usa*

To whom might I turn  
in this state of anguished grief?  
The cares of parent  
for child—the heart of  
the parent is first to know.

That misery is  
the usual state in this  
miserable world  
can only be said of  
this world’s usual miseries.

Toward dawn of the same night:

*madoromade  
sanagara akasu  
fuyu no yo wa  
nezame ni wa aranu  
mono zo kanashiki*

*yo no koto o  
kokoro ni kakenu  
hito ni towaba  
oroka naru mi o  
nageku to iwan*

Not even dozing,  
I lie awake through  
this long winter’s night:  
sorrow that allows no sleep  
even for itself to disturb.

Were I to turn to  
one who takes not the cares of  
life so much to heart,  
he might well call me a fool  
for lamenting this my fate.

Second day:<sup>8</sup>

*wakareshi o  
omoi mo wakazu  
nageku nari  
kinō wa utsutsu  
kyō wa yume ka to*

*harubaru to  
wakareshi koto o*

That we are parted,  
I still cannot comprehend,  
even as I grieve.  
Was yesterday reality,  
and today but a dream?

That we are parted  
and so very far apart;

*omoitsutsu*  
*taebaya hito o*  
*yume ni dani minu*

just to think of it:  
 were she to die, would I see  
 my beloved even in my dreams?

Third day, toward evening:

*wakeideshi*  
*ato dani nokose*  
*ochitsumoru*  
*ko no ha sabishiki*  
*niwa no yūkaze*

Leave at least a trace  
 of her having passed this way  
 through the fallen leaves  
 as you blow through this deserted  
 garden, evening breeze.

Michikatsu's sense of anguished loss is palpable in all these poems. In some of them, such is the weight of poetic association that he could be lamenting the loss of a lover rather than a daughter. But he was not content simply to observe and record his feelings in verse for posterity; his mentions of their correspondence in the headnotes to his poems reveal that he tried to keep in touch with Nakako even after she had gone. And father and daughter did manage, for a time, to communicate by mail. On the fifth day after the women left the capital, Michikatsu received a letter from his daughter. Nakako's words—the first we have—survive only in her father's poetic record of them:

Fifth day. Upon reading a letter from Sawayama:

*tayori ari to*  
*kakiokuru ato no*  
*mizuguki ya*  
*ima miru sode ni*  
*nagarekinuran*

"I have your letter,"  
 say the strokes of your brush  
 that you write and send me;  
 now, looking at them,  
 a stream of tears flows, soaking my  
 sleeves.

In an age when letters were transported by relay runners or on horseback, Michikatsu has managed to send word to his daughter on her way to Sunpu, and she has managed to reply. Sawayama, where Nakako's letter was written, had been the site of Ishida Mitsunari's castle, guarding the pass through the Suzuka Mountains on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa. This means that the party bound for Sunpu went by way of the old Eastern Mountain Road, before it was rerouted to the east from Kusatsu, near the

southern end of the lake and renamed the Eastern Sea Road. This older route avoided both the multiple crossings of the Ibi, Nagara, and Kiso rivers at the delta below Nagoya and the alternative seven-league ferry crossing from Kuwana to Miya.

Meanwhile, Michikatsu's outpouring of grief continued. On the eighth day after Nakako's departure, he wrote:

|                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>ko wa sutetsu</i>    | My child I've given up;             |
| <i>kokoro o dani mo</i> | but my love for her, at least,      |
| <i>hōrasaji</i>         | I'll not let go;                    |
| <i>to mo omoedomo</i>   | yet oh! What a wretched world       |
| <i>ana u yo no naka</i> | that I must even think such things. |

Tenth day. Looking at the things she has left behind:

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>ika ni shite</i>      | How shall I ever                 |
| <i>kono yo ni hito o</i> | see her again in this world?     |
| <i>Futamigata</i>        | Yet oh for the chance            |
| <i>kai aru ura ni</i>    | that we might meet by the shores |
| <i>au yoshi mo ga na</i> | of shell-rich Futami Bay!        |

"Futami Bay" (*Futamigata*) refers to the shore near Ise in present-day Mie Prefecture. The location is used here not because the women passed anywhere nearby, but because *futami* means "see again" and is the central pivot around which the poem's meaning is wrapped.

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>yukikaeri</i>       | Going, coming back,       |
| <i>omou mo kurushi</i> | even thinking is painful. |
| <i>waga kokoro</i>     | If only I could           |
| <i>shitau yukue ni</i> | follow her as my heart    |
| <i>soihatene tada</i>  | so longs to do—if only!   |

Michikatsu sounds increasingly desperate as he searches—hopelessly, from the tone of this poem—for something that might distract him from his agony.

On the twelfth day after Nakako's departure from Kyoto, by which time she and her party had arrived in Sunpu, Michikatsu sent her a copy of the sixteenth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, in which the eternal life of the

Buddha is described. The *Lotus Sutra* was transmitted to Japan in the authoritative Chinese translation completed by the Central Asian monk Kumarajiva in 406, and quickly became the most influential of all sutras in Japanese Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> The chapter Michikatsu sent was in the hand of his old friend the linked-verse master Kenryo, who had died in the month before Nakako's departure.<sup>10</sup> It is most famous for its parable about the father who uses "expedient means" (that is, lies) to convince his children to take a medicine that will cure them of the effects of a poison they have drunk. At the conclusion of the chapter, the Buddha reiterates his message in poetry:

I am the father of this world,  
 saving those who suffer and are afflicted.  
 Because of the befuddlement of ordinary people,  
 though I live, I give out word I have entered extinction.  
 For if they see me constantly,  
 arrogance and selfishness arise in their minds.  
 Abandoning restraint, they give themselves up to the five desires  
 and fall into the evil paths of existence.  
 Always I am aware of which living beings  
 practice the way, and which do not,  
 and in response to their needs for salvation  
 I preach various doctrines for them.  
 At all times I think to myself:  
 How can I cause living beings  
 to gain entry into the unsurpassed way  
 and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha?<sup>11</sup>

It is possible that Michikatsu sent his daughter a copy of this chapter principally for its talismanic value, to protect her in exile. But it is just as possible that Nakako was able to construe the classical Chinese text of the sutra, and that her father expected her to understand its message. Nakako has been guilty of "abandoning restraint," has "given herself up to the five desires and fallen into the evil paths of existence." Exile will provide her with an opportunity to repent and to return to the path of salvation. Still, she is not to think that the Buddha has abandoned her and "entered extinction"; she is not to despair. She must continue to practice the Way, for the Buddha will see: as he insists, always he is there, attempting to help

living beings toward enlightenment. This, I like to think, is what Michikatsu wanted his daughter to know.

On the paper with which he wrapped the sutra chapter, Michikatsu wrote:

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>narai aru</i>          | Trying to take comfort              |
| <i>oya no wakare mo</i>   | in the lesson that                  |
| <i>nagusame yo</i>        | parent and child must part,         |
| <i>kono yo ni shiranu</i> | I find myself lamenting             |
| <i>nageki o mo shitsu</i> | in ways this world has never known. |

We do not know whether the package ever reached her. What is perhaps most poignant is that he needed to believe it would.

### “WARDEN OF NIIJIMA”

The party of thirteen or so women took eleven days to reach Sunpu, arriving on 1609.10.11. The retired shogun was away hawking near the foot of Mount Fuji, and there is no record of his having met the women. An NHK television drama showed him shouting theatrically and threatening them with his sword as they cowered before him, a most unlikely scenario given his amused reaction when first told of the scandal.<sup>12</sup> But in any case, no time was wasted in sentencing the five. The very next day, they were ordered into exile by the Sunpu magistrate, Hikosaka Kyūbei Mitsumasa.<sup>13</sup> They were to be sent to Niijima, a volcanic island ten square miles in area that lay in the Pacific Ocean about fifty-three miles south of Ajiro, the port on the eastern coast of the Izu Peninsula from which the ships carrying the women would depart.<sup>14</sup>

Nakako managed to send word to her family in Kyoto before the women left for Ajiro on the twelfth, and by 10.17, Michikatsu had received her letter. Given the speed at which it traveled—taking only five days, when the women had taken more than ten to walk the same distance—it must have been carried by couriers entrusted with the correspondence between the retired shogun, or his Sunpu magistrate, and the Kyoto shogunal deputy. When Michikatsu received the letter, he was devastated.

Seventeenth day. Word comes; and with the letter that I write to send in reply:

|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>kaku bakari</i>      | That they should make you   |
| <i>Niijima-mori ni</i>  | warden of Niijima—          |
| <i>nasan to wa</i>      | to go as far as that—       |
| <i>sasuga ima made</i>  | until now, how could I      |
| <i>omoi ya wa seshi</i> | have imagined such a thing? |

Michikatsu's poem recalls an earlier exile, Emperor GoToba, who in 1221 was sent to the Oki Islands in the Sea of Japan after a failed rebellion against the Kamakura shogunate. GoToba, however, was imperious:

|                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>ware koso wa</i>                   | I and none other                |
| <i>nii shima-mori yo</i>              | am the new warden of this isle. |
| <i>Oki no umi no</i>                  | Bear that in mind—              |
| <i>araki nami kaze</i>                | you winds who would raise rough |
|                                       | waves                           |
| <i>kokoroshite fuke</i> <sup>15</sup> | in the seas around Oki!         |

Michikatsu's poem puns on this older poem: his "warden of Niijima" (*Niijima-mori*) might also be read "new warden of the isle" (*nii shima-mori*). But his tone is very different; he seems shocked that Nakako is to be sent to Niijima. Had he convinced himself that as women, they would merely be banished to the remote countryside in Izu? And given that they would be leaving the mainland, how did he imagine his letter would reach Nakako? Perhaps in his letters he explained his thoughts and feelings in more detail, but unfortunately none of them survives.



We can reconstruct the women's likely route from Sunpu to Ajiro: first, they walked the Eastern Sea Road right around the shoreline of Suruga Bay to the Mishima station, a distance of almost thirty-seven miles. The road forks here, and the Eastern Sea Road continues on to the major post-station and checkpoint of Hakone, then to Odawara and onward to Edo. The women would have turned off at Mishima and taken the Nebukawa Road to Atami, the hot spring on the eastern side of the Izu Peninsula overlooking Sagami Bay. From Atami to Ajiro, there is a coastal pathway known as the Shimoda Road, which presumably they took. Given the distances involved and the rough terrain, it is hard to imagine the journey taking less than a week.



Once they had arrived in Ajiro, fishermen were hired to sail the women to Nijima. More than one vessel would be required, for the boats were small and a total of seven women were going: the five former concubines and the two personal servants they were allowed to take with them. One servant was attached to Shin'ōsuke, who, as a former assistant chief palace attendant, was the highest ranking of the exiles. The other was attached to Nakako, who was next in the pecking order.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Sanuki, who had been a lesser lady of rank, was intended to wait upon the remaining two palace attendants.

Later in the Edo period, special boats made regular runs between Edo and the Izu islands, where those convicted of illegal gambling and manslaughter, and monks guilty of breaking their vows of chastity, served out their sentence of banishment to a distant island.<sup>17</sup> The situation in 1609, before the system was regularized, was entirely ad hoc. It may well be that the story told in *The Tale of Kazan* is at least partly credible: the women resting from their journey while arrangements are made with local fishermen, the corrupt official and his henchman attempting to extract “a little consideration,” the sailors so full of pity that for a moment they have to “put down their oars.”

## FAREWELL TO MICHIKATSU

The one hopeful development in Michikatsu's life after his beloved daughter had left was an offer of support from the Konoe, the most powerful of the noble families at court. It came from Konoe Nobutada, elder brother of GoYōzei's Consort Sakiko. Despite his exalted status, Nobutada himself had fallen foul of GoYōzei when, “cross-dressed” as a warrior, he twice attempted to join Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea. For this and other breaches of courtly decorum, he had been banished to Satsuma in Kyushu for almost three years between 1594 and 1596, and after his return to Kyoto, he had had to wait four years before his court rank and office were restored.<sup>18</sup> As he had bitter experience of the emperor's irascible temper, it is not surprising that he took the side of a fellow nobleman who had been similarly afflicted. On the third day after Nakako's departure, Nobutada's gifts began to arrive, and Michikatsu recorded the poems that accompanied them.<sup>19</sup>

From the Konoe mansion came the gift of a keg of saké and other tokens of condolence. In the reply that I sent, I included the poem about “the

chill rain of tears that soaks my sleeves / a never-ending winter." The next day, at the end of their letter:

*asakaranu  
nageki no moto ni  
moru shigure  
yoso no sode ni mo  
kakarū koro kana*

Those "chill rains" of your  
far from shallow lamentation  
spill through this tree  
to wet our sleeves as well;  
such a time is this, alas!

*kiku hito no  
sode ni furekeri  
omoi suru  
hahaso no mori no  
chie no shizuku o*

The sleeves of we who  
but listen are alike touched  
by a mother's tears:  
droplets from myriad branches  
in a grove of mother oak.

*tanomi aru  
sono harakara no  
oisaki no  
tōki yukue ni  
omoinagusame*

The prospects of  
her brother over the long road  
in the years ahead:  
upon that you may depend,  
and console yourselves therein.

In these poems, Nobutada's sympathy for Michikatsu and his family is clear, and his explicit offer of support undoubtedly genuine. Quite apart from the sympathy that flowed from his own brush with the dragon's scales, he had his reasons for soliciting allies. In 1605 he had adopted a nephew as his heir. The boy, who became Konoe Nobuhiro, was the second son of Nobutada's sister Sakiko by Emperor GoYōzei, and the younger brother of the prince who would succeed GoYōzei as Emperor GoMizuno'ō. Both the young Konoe heir and his elder brother the heir apparent would need advisors, close attendants they could trust. The chance to become such a courtier was what Nobutada was offering Nakako's brother.

Michikatsu appended two poems to his reply, and, in time-honored fashion, he was careful to respond to each of the subjects Nobutada had raised. The first of these was "mother": the word *hahaso* not only means "oak" but also conveniently contains the word for mother, *haha*. The poems reveal that in 1609 Nakako's mother was still alive, and distressed by her daughter's fate.

*shigurureba  
kotoshi wa wakite*

Thanks to the chill rains,  
this year they are dyed

|                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>sometekeri</i>        | a markedly deeper shade;          |
| <i>hahaso wa usuki</i>   | though I've heard that mother oak |
| <i>iro to kikishi mo</i> | normally is pale of hue.          |

The conceit that leaves are dyed a deeper shade by autumn rain pervades Japanese poetry. In Michikatsu's response poem, the rain that darkens the "mother oak" also suggests the tears shed by the mother herself—Nakako's mother.

The second subject Nobutada had raised was "brother." Michikatsu's response:

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>tanomu zo yo</i>     | You it is                          |
| <i>sono harakara no</i> | we are depending upon,             |
| <i>oisaki no</i>        | for her brother's prospects        |
| <i>tōki yukue mo</i>    | over the long road in years ahead: |
| <i>tada kimi o nomi</i> | you and you alone.                 |

With this poem, he requests Nobutada's support. In 1609 Michimura was twenty-one years old and a major in the Palace Guards. His career—and with it, the fortunes of the Nakanoin house as a whole—had been put at risk by his sister's disgrace; he would need help to get on. The exchange between the two older men reminds us of the continued importance of strong backing at court for a man's advancement. Michikatsu had done everything he could for Michimura: trained him to compose poetry, to collate and copy texts; and launched him in the literary circles of the capital. (Michikatsu's only omission would seem to have been his failure to eradicate his son's Tango accent. In later years, GoMizuno'o would recall Michimura's "provincial accent, even when reading *Genji*, [and] how often he would pronounce words [incorrectly] with a high pitch.")<sup>20</sup> Did Michikatsu sense that he did not have long to live? At this point in his life, he does not seem to have felt that there was anything more he could do for his son—hence his direct appeal to the Konoe to look after Michimura's prospects.

On the twentieth day after Nakako's departure, Michikatsu received a pair of saké flasks from the Konoe, with this accompanying poem:

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>hitotsui no</i>      | In contrast to the     |
| <i>suzu no iro yori</i> | dusky hue of this pair |
| <i>onozukara</i>        | of saké flasks—        |

*naka naru mono mo*  
*morohaku to shire*

their contents, pray know,  
 are naturally of the purest.

In reply [Michikatsu sent]:

*tabitabi no*  
*nasake no hodo mo*  
*asakarazu*  
*miru ni namida mo*  
*morohaku ni shite*

When I see how  
 far from shallow is the depth  
 of your repeated kindness,  
 my tears of gratitude  
 are naturally of the purest.

Nobutada is nothing if not assiduous in his expressions of concern. And in his approach to the Nakanoin at the time of Nakako's exile, evidently an alliance important to both families was forged—based upon their mutual experience of imperial wrath.

Time and again in his poems Michikatsu emphasized the unprecedented nature of his grief. Parting in death was supposed to be the ultimate anguish, but clearly the prospect of death could not compare with the desolation he experienced when he was parted from his daughter, convinced as he was—and correctly so—that he would never see her again. Michikatsu died a little more than six months after Nakako was banished. His last poems about his daughter are full of abject misery and tears.

Thereafter, on various occasions as we continued to worry about her:

*urei o mo*  
*wasururu ya tote*  
*nomu sake ni*  
*mata yoinaki no*  
*tane to naritsutsu*

This saké I drink,  
 thinking it might make me  
 forget my misery,  
 is become but the cause of  
 ever more drunken weeping.

*ōzora o*  
*tada naozari ni*  
*fuku kaze mo*  
*kokoro ni kakaru*  
*okitsushiranami*

Even the winds  
 that blow aimlessly across  
 the breadth of the heavens  
 only burden me with fears  
 of the white waves they raise at sea.

*harubaru to*  
*hanere kojima no*

Your spirits crushed by  
 the wind and waves that buffet

|                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>namikaze ni</i>      | your little island,               |
| <i>kudaku kokoro o</i>  | so far removed from here:         |
| <i>kudakete zo omou</i> | just thinking of it crushes mine. |

On New Year's Day 1610 he struggled to sound the appropriate auspicious note in his first poem of the year:

|                                        |                             |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>tachikaeru</i>                      | Once again we greet         |
| <i>haru no hajime o</i>                | the advent of a new spring; |
| <i>aogu nari</i>                       | and our hope is             |
| <i>shima no hoka made</i>              | that even beyond her island |
| <i>nodoka naru yo to</i> <sup>21</sup> | tranquility will reign.     |

On the eighth of the second month Michikatsu held a poetry party at his home; then on the eleventh he was called to the palace to edit texts of *The Tale of Genji*—which meant coming face to face with the emperor who had wanted Nakako “executed painfully, and before mine own eyes,” but had had to settle for banishment instead. How did the two men feel about each other? Presumably GoYōzei was untroubled: those who are pandered to their entire lives tend to become oblivious to the pain they cause others. But surely Michikatsu struggled to suppress his emotions. His devotion was to duty (*I must behave as a courtier does*), to family (*I must go for Michimura's sake*), and to scholarship (*I must sort out these manuscripts*).

On the twentieth of the intercalary second month, Michikatsu paid a visit to his friend the court-appointed Sinologist Funabashi Hidekata, tutor to both GoYōzei and GoMizuno'o. It almost seems as if he had summoned the strength to resume his former routine. But even work could not assuage his grief, and soon afterward he took to his bed. By 3.23 it was clear that he was dying. Various friends and relatives visited him for the last time. Among the callers were Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi, father of Hei no Naishi, the palace attendant colleague of Nakako's who had escaped punishment and was pregnant with another of GoYōzei's children; Shirakawa Masatomo, Michikatsu's half-brother who was head of the Department of Religion; and Funabashi Hidekata.<sup>22</sup> On 3.24 Michikatsu transmitted the remaining *Secret Teachings* to Michimura.<sup>23</sup> The next day he died—at about ten in the morning, according to Tokiyoshi; around noon, according to Hidekata; about two in the afternoon, according to another contemporary chronicler. The discrepancies may reflect the different times of

day that word of Michikatsu's death reached his friends, or they may simply be because people were often unsure exactly what time it was and perforce made their own rough reckonings. He was fifty-four years old.

Michikatsu was remembered by his contemporaries as "learned in court practices" and "an erudite among the nobility." Hidekata recorded the following tribute in his diary: "He was one of the greatest poets of our time—what a loss to the Way of Poetry! I weep bitter tears."<sup>24</sup> Such was Michikatsu's renown that special mention of his death was made even in the official history of the Tokugawa shogunate. The short obituary reads:

In his day, no one was more learned in court ceremonial and protocol than this nobleman. It was he, known as Yasokuken Sonen, who composed *The River Min Enters Chu*. Though he was a nobleman of the imperial court and not a member of the warrior estate, he lived in retirement for twenty-five years, where for long, he wielded his brush and cultivated the literary arts singlehandedly. He was revered in both the capital and the countryside, and thus we include him here.<sup>25</sup>

The eulogy offered him by shogunal historians shows what a deep impression he made on the men who actually ruled Japan.

## SHIPWRECK

In the third month of 1610, when Michikatsu died a broken man, Nakako was far away. The final section of Ōta Gyūichi's account of the dragon-scale scandal reveals what those in the capital knew about the fate of the women. In the tenth month of 1609, after their arrival in Sunpu, they had been sentenced to an initial period of exile on the island of Niijima, and "the following spring," that is, the spring in which Michikatsu died, they were to be transported to the more distant island of Mikurajima. Gyūichi describes the scene as they prepared to depart the mainland for Niijima:

[The court ladies] took off the [silk] kimono that they were wearing and replaced them with three or four garments, two of quilted cotton and two old kimono. They filled their sleeves with various foodstuffs. It was a touching scene that cannot easily be described.

The women's arrival on Mikurajima is described with some poignancy:

It appears to have been their signal that about one league this side of Mikurajima they would send up smoke from the boat, whereupon from Mikurajima they would also send up smoke. At the landing place there were only three dwellings and nothing else besides. It was a salt-making settlement of four women and three men. [The court ladies] said, "You can't leave us here!" [But] from the precipitously high cliff face they let down a rope woven of wisteria, which was attached to them and by means of which they ascended, so it is said. This was no place fit for human habitation. How boundlessly pitiful!

At this climactic point in his narrative, Gyūichi is again moved to quote poetry. He recalls a poem by the retired Emperor GoDaigo, banished in 1332 to one of the Oki Islands for plotting against the Kamakura shogunate. GoDaigo's journey into exile is rendered poetic in the fourteenth-century historical narrative *The Clear Mirror*; arriving at the Koyano post station in the province of Settsu, the retired emperor is said to have composed this poem:

|                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>inochi areba</i>                  | So long as I have life       |
| <i>Koya no nokiba no</i>             | I can gaze at the moon       |
| <i>tsuki mo mitsu</i>                | on the eaves at Koya;        |
| <i>mata ika naran</i>                | But what shall become of me  |
| <i>yukusue no sora</i> <sup>26</sup> | under these skies in future? |

Gyūichi's quotation from *The Clear Mirror* is not exact, but expresses the same idea:

|                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>yo ni sumeba</i>      | So long as I live               |
| <i>kaya ga nokiba ni</i> | I gaze at the moon              |
| <i>tsuki mo mitsu</i>    | on the eaves of a thatched hut; |
| <i>shirarenu mono wa</i> | what one can never know is      |
| <i>hito no yukusue</i>   | what the future has in store.   |

And in case we haven't yet grasped his point, Gyūichi reminds us: "Long ago, someone from the court, of very high rank, came down in the world, and while living out in the country, wrote this. There have been many such cases in this world." Forbearing to mention the emperor by name, Gyūichi reiterates that illustrious birth is no guarantee of everlasting eminence.

Finally, as Gyūichi concludes his account of the dragon-scale scandal, he reveals his source:

The widow of the Yanagiwara Grand Counselor, Yōrin'in, returned to the capital from Suruga on the second of the twelfth month. Having heard the gist of her story, I here write it down. Because this was a palace matter, it is hard to get to the bottom of things. This is the extent of what I have heard, from the outside.

Keichō 15 (1610), forty-seventh year of the sexagenary cycle, second month, second day

Ōta Izumi-no-Kami, in the eighty-fourth year of his life<sup>27</sup>

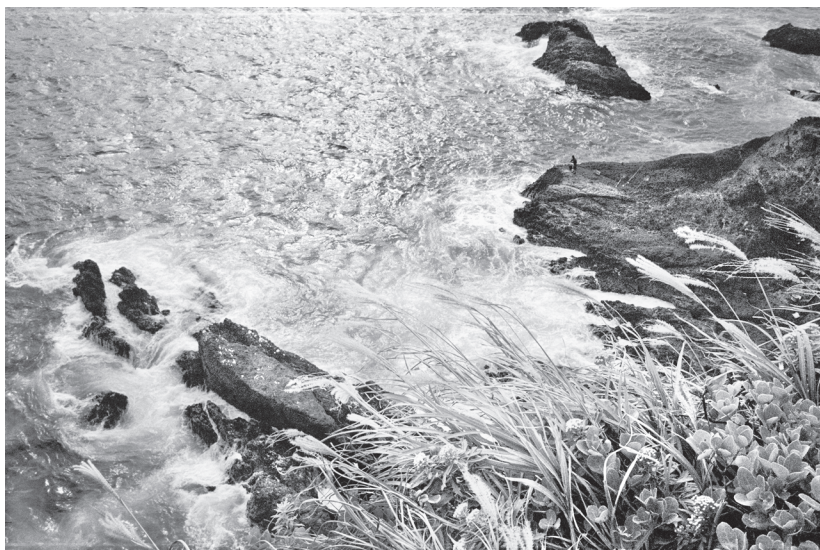
Let us attend to the dates mentioned here. By Gyūichi's own account, the women were sent into exile on the island of Nijima in the winter of 1609, and their chaperone, Yōrin'in, returned to Kyoto early in the twelfth month of the same year. She was not in Sunpu the following spring, when the five women were supposed to be sent on to Mikurajima. By that time, she had been back in the capital for more than a month and had already given her version of events to Gyūichi. Which is to say, neither she nor Gyūichi knew for certain that the women had actually been sent to the more distant island. He assumes that they had, and he paints a grim picture of the primitive conditions they would have faced there: no beach where a boat could put in, the sheer cliff face from which a rope was lowered and the women hoisted up, the only inhabitants humble salt makers.

In fact, the women were never sent on to Mikurajima. A few years later, in 1616, the Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan, passing through Izu en route from Edo to Kyoto, composed a travelogue in which he noted:

In recent years, before the abdication of the previous Emperor, some palace women were found guilty of fornication and placed under house arrest; but the Emperor repeatedly demanded that they be put to death. The Grand Minister of State [Tokugawa Ieyasu], being a compassionate man, placated His Majesty, and Nijima, the island to which he had these several palace women banished, lies in the offing here.<sup>28</sup>

Razan was a shogunal insider who worked for Ieyasu and then Hidetada; it is hard to imagine him being wrong about the women's destination.





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The Izu Peninsula meets the Pacific Ocean.

PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

And Nakako, in a remarkable stroke of bad fortune turned good, never even made it as far as Niijima. Instead, she and her maid, O-Yasu, with the fishermen sailing their boat, put out from Ajiro only to be blown off course in a sudden storm. Rather like the old fisherman in *The Tale of Kazan*, for five terrifying days they were tossed about on the waves. Finally, they managed to find shelter in the beautiful little harbor of Nagatsuro at the tip of the Izu Peninsula, where the waters are calm even when the seas beyond are choppy.

The Izu Peninsula meets the Pacific Ocean in a series of cliffs that fall straight into the roiling sea. Waves break endlessly over jagged rocks that jut out of the water, or they hurl themselves full force against the cliff face. All is blue sea, salt spray, and hissing white spume. The middle of the lunar tenth month (late November by the Gregorian calendar), when Nakako's boat set sail, is well after the end of the normal typhoon season, but at any time of the year the seas around Japan can be affected by typhoons hundreds of miles to the south. Before the advent of satellite weather forecasting, a boat might easily have put out from Ajiro, bound for Niijima, without the crew realizing that rough weather was on the way. So many ships were wrecked off the coast of the Izu Peninsula that a lighthouse is said to have been built at the southernmost point of Irōzaki as early as 1636—well after Nakako was banished, of course.<sup>29</sup> And some ships were deliberately brought to grief by wreckers. A Kyoto doctor, Tachibana Nankei, included this grim description of the area in his travelogue *Record of a Journey to the East*, first published in 1795.

In times past, the people of the seacoast of southern Izu were uncommonly crude and fearsome natured. . . . According to an old story I heard, when callers would come to offer their New Year's felicitations they would first cry out, "The southeaster's on its way!" To which the householder would reply, "Let it come! We'll celebrate with old nails!" Such were their New Year's greetings. When I asked what this meant, I was told: the "southeaster" is a wild wind that blows in from the sea. When this wind blew, the people of the region would take torches in hand, or, carrying doors on their backs, they would light fires and walk up and down the shore. Ships plying the seas, buffeted by these dreadful winds, would be looking for a harbor in which they might take refuge. When they saw the light of the fires, they would think that there must be a village there, and sail toward them. The next instant they would be wrecked upon the rocks

that jut up from the seabed. In the morning, the local people would put out from the shore in boats and loot the cargo and equipage of the wrecked ship. Which is precisely why, even now, the ceilings and flooring of many old houses in the region are constructed of the planks of ships.<sup>30</sup>

Nankei added that in recent years, a rock formation resembling an “Amida triad” (the Amida Buddha with his attendant bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi) had been discovered in a cave that could only be entered by boat, and local people had begun venerating it. “They’ve come to know the wonders of the Buddhist law, which, quite naturally, has softened their hearts, so that nowadays, they say, their ways are much gentler.”<sup>31</sup>

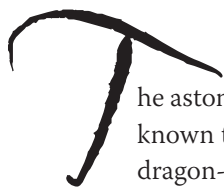
The year 1609, when Nakako was almost lost at sea, would have been the time *before* the hearts of those who lived along the coast of southern Izu had been “softened.” What knowledge and experience it must have taken for the pilot of Nakako’s boat to navigate his craft back to safety after the storm had passed! It is little short of miraculous that everyone survived the ordeal. Perhaps it struck local people as miraculous too—a noblewoman and her maid, washed ashore in a small fishing vessel, almost as if Kaguyahime, the moon princess of Japanese legend, had appeared in their midst. Such was the extraordinary nature of the event that someone even recorded the names of the fisherfolk who came to their aid in Nagatsuro. They were Genshirō, Nobukichi, Magobei, Yoshirō, and Zengoemon—all men, all known only by their given names.<sup>32</sup> (As in other parts of the world, at this time in Japan too, common people did not have surnames.) Their names have come down to us in local histories. The most important of these is an account of Nakako’s shipwreck, rescue, and life in exile written by the late Suzuki Tsutomu and privately published in 1959. Suzuki was, he believed, the eighty-seventh generation head of the Kutta-Suzuki house—the cognomen “Kutta” is taken from the old name of the village where the family has lived since time immemorial and is used to distinguish them from other Suzuki families in the area—and his account is the most detailed because it was the Kutta-Suzuki who were chosen to look after Nakako and her maid, O-Yasu, for the next fourteen years.

# Chapter 7

## THE LONG REPRIEVE

An occasional memento of past folly, however painful,  
might not be without use.

—JANE AUSTEN, *NORTHANGER ABBEY*



he astonishing story of Nakako's shipwreck and survival is unknown to the larger scholarly world in Japan. Accounts of the dragon-scale scandal note the punishments meted out to the men and women, then swiftly move on to consider the political ramifications of the power struggle between GoYōzei and Ieyasu, court and shogunate. As everywhere, scholars have tended to focus on the centers of power. What might have happened to the banished concubines after they left the capital has not been considered worth investigating.

In the midst of this near-universal bias toward the center, however, Japan also supports lively networks of local historians. Provincial innkeepers and schoolteachers, curators and librarians, retired farmers and rural factory workers—to mention only those who have generously shared their knowledge with me over the years—work tirelessly to preserve the history of their local area. We know what happened to Nakako after she was sent into exile because Izu historians have studied and published accounts of her rescue and reprieve.

Very occasionally, ripples made by this research on the periphery come to the attention of those at the center. In the early 1970s, the haiku scholar Morikawa Akira happened to mention the dragon-scale scandal to an

acquaintance. Morikawa knew about the scandal because one of the courtiers involved, Karasumaru Mitsuhiro, was an important figure in the history of Japanese poetry and, as we have seen, an intimate of both Hosokawa Yūsai and Nakako's father, Michikatsu. Morikawa's acquaintance in turn told him he had seen mention of one of the palace attendants caught up in the scandal, a daughter of the Nakanoin, in a local chronicle entitled *History of Kamo District in Shizuoka Prefecture*, first published in 1914. According to this volume, despite the official record that Nakako had been banished to Niijima, after her shipwreck she had in fact been hidden away in a village deep in the Izu countryside.<sup>1</sup> Even more extraordinary was the revelation that three hundred and fifty years later, descendants of the Kutta-Suzuki family, who had looked after her during her exile, still had in their possession a number of manuscripts she had left behind. In the spring of 1973, Morikawa set off to visit them. His account of that visit, with a transcription of one of the manuscripts, was published in his university's journal the following year.

Morikawa's article attracted little attention. To the best of my knowledge, scholars of the dragon-scale scandal remain unaware of it, and even the most recent official history of Shizuoka Prefecture, a massive thirty-five-volume compendium, manages to find room for the men but completely fails to mention the women.<sup>2</sup> I would never have known of Morikawa's article myself if he had not given a copy to that indefatigable bibliographer and doyen of scholars of *The Tale of Genji*, Ii Haruki, who carefully filed it away and, some twenty years later, sent a copy to my husband. Further on in this chapter we shall return to the manuscripts Nakako left behind. First, the Kutta-Suzuki family—who were they? And how was it that Nakako came into their care?

## NIJŌ

In the tenth month of 1609, when the sailors who were to have transported Nakako and her maid, O-Yasu, to exile on the island of Niijima managed to steer their boat to safety in the harbor of Nagatsuro, they found a thriving community. Where other forms of transportation are nonexistent, seaports flourish. Nagatsuro was such a port, the only town for miles around, big enough even to support a number of prostitutes. Villagers who lived around the inlets of southern Izu depended on both

farming and fishing for their livelihood. They fished for bonito and tuna with pole and line, and they netted grey mullet and mackerel.<sup>3</sup> Their fields were—and still are—tiny stepped plots walled with stone, rising up the hillsides behind their wooden houses. During the day while the men were out fishing, the women toiled in the fields, tending vegetables; or they dried fish and seaweed, pickled and preserved beans and vegetables, mended nets, and looked out for their children. Any surplus they took into town to sell or trade.

The local magnate in Nagatsuro went by the name of Misu.<sup>4</sup> In this case, possession of a surname means that the family was once samurai. By the early seventeenth century, they had given up this status and “returned to agriculture,” as the Japanese expression has it. Still, the cachet of their samurai origins lingered: the Misu were keepers of the town’s only fortification, the Shiramizu Fort, built to defend the harbor against attacks from pirates. And when something out of the ordinary and thus potentially troublesome happened—such as the arrival of a couple of noblewomen in their midst—it was Misu who had to decide what should be done. He did not want Nakako and O-Yasu to remain in Nagatsuro. They were simply too exposed there on the coast; word was sure to get out. And then what?

Misu arranged for the women to be taken inland to a village known as Kutta. The headman there, Suzuki Mondonosuke Shōemon, was a country samurai, a man who derived his income from agriculture, including lands he worked himself, not from a stipend paid him by an overlord to whom he owed feudal services. He was of similar status as Misu, so it was natural that the two should know each other. Suzuki also acted as priest at the local Kutta Shrine (as do his descendants), where his family’s tutelary deity, Mizokuihime no Mikoto, was venerated (and still is).<sup>5</sup> As sometime priest, he was in charge of the religious rituals vitally important to a society that was completely dependent on the bounty of the natural world for its survival.

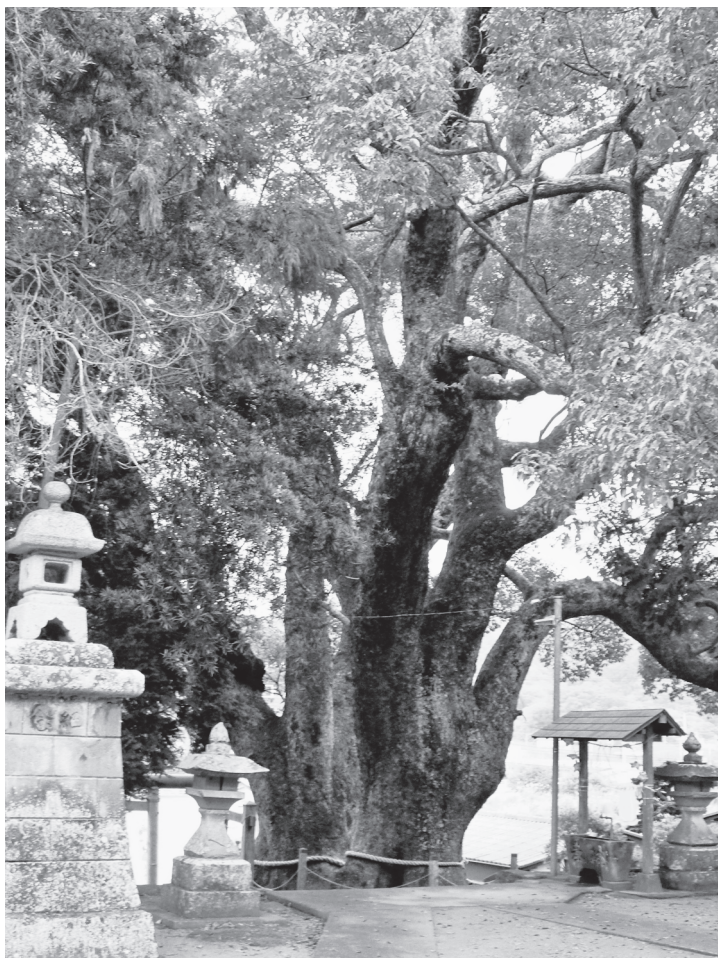
The connection between the Kutta-Suzuki family and the shrine, now a branch of the Mishima Shrine, endures to this day, and is celebrated annually at the harvest festival on November 2. Early in the morning, a portable shrine decorated with a golden dragon is carried to the Suzuki house by the young men of the district, who display their strength and their skills at dancing, drumming, flute playing, and singing to the assembled family before being fêted with saké and festive foods. Then the shrine sets off again, slowly winding its way along the paths between the fields to the foot



of the hill where a pair of massive camphor trees, known as the “husband and wife camphors,” towers over the gateway to the main shrine. According to local legend, the trees were planted in the early years of the ninth century, between 806 and 810. If this is true—and it is not impossible, camphors being famously long-lived—they would already have been 800 years old by the time Nakako first saw them. In a final explosion of energy, the young men, portable shrine on their shoulders, catapult themselves up the stone stairs and into the forecourt of the shrine, where they receive a rapturous reception crowned with copious amounts of saké.

The village of Kutta has been known since Nakako’s day as Nijō, “Second Avenue,” and it is one of a number of villages in the area that boast Kyoto place names. Others include Shimokamo (“Lower Kamo”), Ichijō (“First Avenue”), and a village called by the aristocratic surname Fujiwara. True or not, local lore has it that Nakako gave them these names as a way of comforting herself with the familiar in what was a new and strange environment. The river now known as the Aono was formerly known as the Kamo River, and indeed the confluence of the Aono with the Nijō River resembles a miniature version of the confluence of the Kamo with the Takano River above Ichijō in Kyoto. Also reminiscent of Kyoto are the blue herons that stand motionless on riverbanks and rocks, waiting for fish to swim into their sights. High in the sky above, kites ride the currents of the air, their sweet and plaintive cries piercing the quiet.

Villages in the interior of the Izu Peninsula are completely different from those on the coast. Protected by the surrounding hills from the ravages of wind and waves, the climate here is warmer and the soil more fertile. Families’ fields are bigger, with the result that their houses are much farther apart. The village of Nijō lies in a shallow valley enclosed on three sides by tree-covered hills. Deer and wild boar, badgers, hares, and pheasants live in the hills—but no bears; it is never cold enough for a hibernating creature. The southern part of the peninsula is warm, and frost and snow are extremely rare. (Though the palm trees that presently dot the landscape are exotics, introduced in the nineteenth century.) Hot springs were first discovered in the area about 1560, but unlike the nearby villages of Shimokamo or Kano, Nijō has no hot springs. The valley can never have been much more than it is now—a few houses built up against the hillsides, leaving the narrow plain between the hills free for growing rice. An eighteenth-century gazetteer lists the annual assessed yield of the village at just over 530 *koku*, about 2,700 U.S. bushels.<sup>6</sup> By early winter,



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“Husband and wife” camphor trees tower over the gateway to the Kutta-Mishima Shrine in Nijō.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

when Nakako first arrived in Nijō, the year’s crop of rice would have been harvested and the sheaves stacked up to dry like so many broad-brimmed hats. In the paddies, regrowth would already have been sprouting; soon a winter crop of barley would be sown. In their home fields, the farmers would have been growing winter vegetables for their own consumption,



and strings of bright orange persimmons probably hung from the eaves in front of the farmhouses, drying in the sunshine.

The Kutta-Suzuki house faces due east on a narrow rise overlooking the fields of the Nijō valley below. Next to the main house is a storehouse armored with grey-black tiles in what is known as a “sea slug wall,” after the supposed resemblance of the raised white plaster between the tiles to the sea slug. The plaster is made of lime mixed with seaweed and serves to keep the rain out. Immediately behind the house are neatly clipped azalea hedges, several mandarin trees, and a luxuriant bamboo grove stretching up the hill—an aesthetic touch now, but bamboo with its myriad uses was once cultivated as an extra source of income. At the south side of the house is a row of gravestones, under which generations of the family have been laid to rest. The past is all around. To a contemporary observer, the impression is of peaceful, unchanging, modest prosperity.

The present Kutta-Suzuki house is not, of course, the one Nakako would have known, though the location of the house has not changed. The old house burned down in the late 1870s and was rebuilt in the traditional style: all interior “walls” are sliding doors that can be removed to create one large space suitable for entertaining at coming-of-age celebrations and weddings, funerals, and memorial services. In 1973, when Morikawa visited, the house still had a thatched roof that has since been replaced with tile. Soon after Nakako and O-Yasu arrived to stay, the family built a separate space for the two women, a small lodge where they could live in rough comfort and dignity. This too has long since disappeared, though its location—in front of the house, looking out over the valley below—is still recalled.

In 1609, Nakako was eighteen or nineteen years old and we may assume—there is no evidence to the contrary—in the physical prime of her life. She was not required to work during her exile. Her punishment was banishment from the world of the capital and the court, not hard labor. Presumably the Kutta-Suzuki family did not begrudge her the extra food she and O-Yasu consumed; in this pocket of Japan the long years of war were over, the seasons mild, the land fertile. And as the leading family of the area, it behooved them to treat their unexpected guests with respect, even deference. For her part, Nakako may well have assisted, perhaps even taught, Suzuki family members how to conduct ceremonies and rituals that helped them maintain their distinctive status in the local area, rather as her forebear Lady Nijō had purveyed her knowledge of court clothing and furnishings, poetry and painting, in thirteenth-century Kamakura.<sup>7</sup>



Kutta-Suzuki family graves on the southern side of the main house in Nijō.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

The memory of this striking encounter between a former imperial concubine, her maidservant, and the villagers of seventeenth-century Nijō survives as local lore. So far as I have been able to ascertain, the earliest written reference to her stay in the village appears in the eighteenth-century gazetteer mentioned above: “They say that the younger sister of the Nakanoin Grand Counselor Michimura was banished to the village of Nijō and lived there for twelve years [*sic*] before returning to the capital.”<sup>8</sup> In the early twentieth century, these local stories were consolidated, probably embellished, and so achieved their present form. Nakako helped with the running of the house, the Suzuki family recalls, and in a spirit of feminine noblesse oblige, she taught village girls how to write and how to sew. (No schools are recorded in the area before the mid-nineteenth century.)<sup>9</sup> One year the farmers in the area suffered a succession of disasters when floods in the seventh month were followed by torrential rain and wind in the tenth, resulting in a catastrophically poor harvest. Under the taxation system of the time, farmers kept back some of their crop to eat and some

for next year's seed; the rest went to pay the annual rice tax. How were they to come up with the necessary rice this year? Village leaders decided that there was nothing for it but to petition for a reduction in their taxes. Then someone recalled that Nakako could write—indeed, she had a beautiful hand! Why not ask her to draft their petition? So they did; and she readily agreed to compose the requisite document. The district commissioner was astonished when he saw it; indeed, so amazed that such calligraphic refinement existed in the remote countryside that he granted the villagers' request without further ado. Another year, farmers were blessed with a bumper crop. At the harvest festival that year, it was Nakako who directed the villagers' dancing, and she even entertained them by performing some dances from the Noh theater herself.<sup>10</sup>

As these stories reveal, Nakako is remembered with great affection in Nijō. Everyone there still knows the name of "Nakako-hime," "Princess Nakako"; some even dream about her. Local lore depicts her adjusting readily to life among the villagers: despite her aristocratic birth and the years she had spent serving as an imperial concubine at the palace of Emperor GoYōzei, she is not too proud to share in their joys and sorrows. Perhaps these stories also reflect a new conception of status distinctions that is typical of the reforming period in which they were first written down. Noblewoman or farmer, from the late nineteenth century on, all people were to be first and foremost imperial subjects (*shinmin*), equal in their obligations to the state. And yet if we could know Nakako, we might not be too surprised at how adaptable she was. When we recall that she was born and lived the first eight or nine years of her life in the remote castle town of Tanabe, overlooking the sea on the other side of Japan, her exile in Nijō comes to seem, if not a return to a world that was familiar, then at least a return to an ordinary, unsophisticated sort of life that might not have been without its real pleasures.

## KEEPSAKES

Nakako took with her into exile a number of manuscripts. Knowing how sorely Michikatsu missed his daughter, it seems safe to assume that it was he who prepared them for her. He must have hoped that reading and re-reading them would comfort her during the long years ahead, that the constant presence of her father's and her brother's familiar brushstrokes

would remind her of their abiding love. The manuscripts were packed in a paulownia-wood box that has been carefully repaired by the Kutta-Suzuki family. They recall that when fire engulfed their home in the late 1870s, someone remembered the manuscripts and went back into the burning house to retrieve them. The box had already caught fire, and one of the manuscripts still bears the scars of its narrow escape from destruction.<sup>11</sup>

Michikatsu put together an eclectic collection of texts for his daughter. The first was a narrative, with pictures, copied onto a small scroll. Entitled “Forty-two Debates,” the story begins with an emperor paying a visit to the heir apparent. Admiring the beauty of the cherry blossoms and willows at the Southern Hall of the imperial palace, and feeling rather more bored than usual, the emperor calls for forty-two debates to be held. They are to compare various phenomena, and judgments on their relative merits should be rendered in the form of poems. Spring versus autumn, moonlit nights versus snowy mornings, chrysanthemums versus plum blossoms, longing at dawn versus yearning at dusk, dreams versus letters, even mothers-in-law versus stepmothers and ugliness versus body odor are compared. In the “debate” between dreams and letters, for example—

|                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>hakanashi ya</i>        | How ephemeral                         |
| <i>mare ni machi miru</i>  | the letters for which I wait          |
| <i>tamazusa ni</i>         | yet so rarely see!                    |
| <i>mishi yo no yume wo</i> | How can I compare them to             |
| <i>nani ni tatoen</i>      | all those nights I’ve dreamed of you? |

—we see that the poet prefers dreams for their constancy and tangible reality. The purpose of these forty-two comparisons is, apparently, to instruct the reader in correct courtly aesthetics: autumn should be preferred to spring, moonlit nights to snowy mornings, longing to consummation.<sup>12</sup> In the copy Nakako took to Nijō, the text is in the hand of Michikatsu, and the accompanying illustrations of the various (fictional) poets, all dressed in elaborate court robes, have been copied by Michimura.<sup>13</sup> The photograph on page 149 shows Prince Nakatsukasa, the Kokiden Consort, and their poems. The prince’s poem compares the effects of medicine when ill with meeting a lover one longs for:

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>ureshisa wa</i>    | Though happiness suffuses |
| <i>izure mo onaji</i> | the face in either case,  |

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>iro naredo</i>       | better still are               |
| <i>koishiki kata e</i>  | the feelings of a heart drawn  |
| <i>hiku kokoro kana</i> | to the loved one it longs for. |

And the Kokiden Consort's poem compares (spring) willows swaying in the wind and (autumn) plume grass dampened with dew:

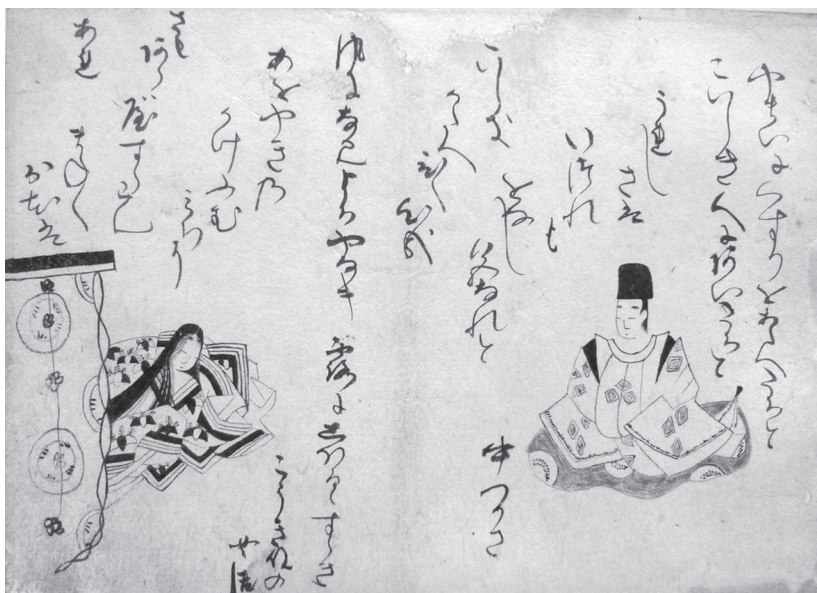
|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>aoyagi no</i>          | Restful it is                      |
| <i>kage fumu michi ni</i> | to still one's step along the road |
| <i>yasurawan</i>          | in the shade of willows green;     |
| <i>sa mo araba are</i>    | be that as it may,                 |
| <i>maneku obana wa</i>    | it is plume grass that beckons.    |

Another manuscript Michikatsu packed for Nakako was a copy in Michimura's hand of a Noh play by Kanze Nobumitsu, grandson of the great medieval playwright Zeami. It is called *The Haen Garden* and is set in Tang-period China. Although the play is no longer performed, the text has survived so we can at least tell what it is about. A fragrant orange tree in a garden known as the Haen bears strange fruit, and an imperial messenger is sent to investigate. An elderly couple who guard the garden dance and perform various wonders.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the existence of this manuscript encouraged the belief that Nakako performed some dances from the Noh theater at the harvest festival one year in Nijō. Or it may be that she did dance for the villagers, and the manuscript helped perpetuate the memory of the occasion.

Also among the manuscripts is a book of calligraphy examples in Michimura's hand, obviously intended to encourage Nakako to keep up her own hand and not let her standards slip, even though she is banished to the remote countryside far from any center of culture.

A fourth manuscript comprises two different texts, both in Michimura's hand. The first is entitled "The Feelings of People in *Genji*: A Match." A total of eighteen questions are posed about characters and events in *The Tale of Genji*: Who is the most forward? The most beautiful? Who are the closer friends? Which would be the more hurtful? Each question is answered in a poem. The first question and answer is:

Which is the more profound: The Emperor's feelings that autumn when the Lady of the Wardrobe in the Paulownia Court sensed that her time



A scene from Nakako's copy of the "Forty-two Debates." Text in the hand of her father, Michikatsu; accompanying illustrations by her brother, Michimura.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

was come, and he found it so difficult to give her leave to depart the palace; or Genji's feelings when the Lady Murasaki passed away?

*tsuki mo senu  
kokoro no yami no  
fukaki yo ni  
kumogakurenishi  
ato zo kanashiki*

In the limitless  
depths of that night of ceaseless  
darkness in his heart,  
after she was hidden in cloud  
was the most sorrowful.<sup>15</sup>

The second part of this manuscript is an untitled work that turns out to be a list of "*Genji* superlatives," in the description of its English translator, "a list of the best and the worst, the most appealing and most deplorable of characters, scenes, and events in *Genji*." A small sampling of the best:



*Man:* Kaoru

*Woman:* the elder sister Princess

*Nun:* She who said, “Is that not his scent?”

*Monk:* The Uji saint

*Looks:* “Even compared to the bloom of the cherry, her beauty surpassed that of the real thing.”

*Disposition:* the Akashi lay monk

*Good Karma:* the Akashi lady

*Superlative Chapter:* “The Sacred Tree”

*Extraordinary Scene:* “When he raised his head from his pillow and listened to the tempest, he felt as if the waves might overwhelm him even where he lay. Though unaware that he wept, his tears were enough to set his pillow afloat.”<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the knowledge of *Genji* required both to compose and to make sense of these two texts is extraordinary. To understand who the author thinks is the best nun in *Genji*, for example, we need to know which one of them said, “Is that not [his] scent?” Modern indices help us to locate the passage swiftly enough: it is in the second-to-last “Writing Practice” chapter, and the speaker is Ukifune:

|                        |                                             |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>sode fureshi</i>    | He who brushed my sleeve                    |
| <i>hito koso miene</i> | is no longer here; and yet                  |
| <i>hana no ka no</i>   | is that not his scent                       |
| <i>sore ka to niou</i> | I detect upon the cherry                    |
| <i>haru no akebono</i> | blossoms of this spring dawn? <sup>17</sup> |

But without the benefit of indices and computer searching, the seveneenth-century reader of this text had to rely on her memory of *Genji* as she pondered the fragments that provide the clues to understanding the answers. Which woman was both an elder sister and a princess? (Answer: Ōigimi.) Whose beauty surpassed “the bloom of the cherry”? (Answer: Murasaki.) Who “raised his head from his pillow and listened to the tempest”? (Answer: Genji.) The hours—days—this must have consumed! As “desert-island reading” it could hardly be bettered. Carting a complete text of *Genji*—fifty-four individually bound chapters in their box—all the way from Kyoto was obviously going to be impossible; indeed, it would not have been permitted. So Nakako’s family sent these two different digest versions with her instead. No one was more qualified to compose—or

perhaps simply to select—them from the Nakanoin store of *Genji* lore: Michikatsu had devoted almost twenty years of his life to the compilation of a vast commentary on *Genji*; both he and Michimura had been copying and collating texts of the tale their entire lives. What these two manuscripts also reveal is just how well Nakako knew *Genji* too.

The final text Nakako took with her was a song from the immensely popular medieval saga *The Tale of the Heike*, in which is recounted the rise and ineluctable fall of the Taira clan (the “Heike” of the title). Taira no Kiyomori, architect of the clan’s aggrandizement, allows a beautiful young singer and dancer known as Hotoke to perform for him. “Since I have granted you an audience,” he tells her, “how can I let the occasion pass without hearing what sort of voice you have? So sing me one of those new songs.” “That I shall, my lord,” she replies. Michikatsu wrote out Hotoke’s song “At this my first sight of you” for Nakako:

At this my first sight of you, my lord  
 This little slip of pine feels she might live a thousand years.  
 While on Turtle Isle in the pond before you  
 A flock of cranes appears, there to disport themselves.

As befits the first audience granted an itinerant entertainer by a powerful lord, Hotoke’s song is full of auspicious references to long life—cranes, pine trees, turtles. *The Tale of the Heike* continues: “This she repeated, and repeated again, singing it beautifully three times through; while all who watched and listened were astonished.”<sup>18</sup>

The copy of Hotoke’s song in Michikatsu’s hand was mounted as a hanging scroll on Chinese brocade. In the years since Morikawa’s visit to the Suzuki in 1973, the scroll has disappeared. At some point—perhaps after Suzuki Tsutomu died in 1986—it seems to have been donated to the Kaizōji, a Zen temple in the village of Iruma overlooking Suruga Bay southwest of Nijō.<sup>19</sup> But during visits to the temple in November 2005 and again in 2009, the superior denied all knowledge of the scroll; and so its present whereabouts, unfortunately, are unknown.

## THE END OF WAR

Nakako lived with the Kutta-Suzuki family in Nijō until 1623, a total of fourteen years. It is inconceivable that officials of the Tokugawa shogunate



did not know she was there. (They certainly knew where to find her when she was pardoned.) The province of Izu had been part of the Tokugawa family's holdings since 1590, when the previous overlords (the later Hōjō) surrendered their castles and lands to Toyotomi Hideyoshi. In the wake of this victory, Hideyoshi forced Ieyasu to give up his former holdings in the Tōkai region, closer to the capital, and enfeoffed him instead with the eight Kanto provinces, farther from the center of power. Izu was one of those, and it remained under direct Tokugawa control through the seventeenth century. "Control" is a relative term, of course, and it is typical of the shogunate's devolved style of local administration that they left people to govern their own affairs. The district commissioner did his rounds, estimating crop yields and perhaps ordering riparian works; his overriding concern was the full and timely payment of taxes. The presence of a couple of banished noblewomen in a remote village was nothing he had jurisdiction over. We must presume that officials in Sunpu were told of Nakako's rescue in Nagatsuro and removal to Nijō, and that they informed Ieyasu, but there is no record of any deliberations there may have been between the retired shogun and his staff. Sunpu Castle was destroyed by fire in 1610 and again in 1635, and much must have been lost in these conflagrations. It may also be that no record was ever made of what was really just a minor mishap in the larger scheme of shogunal power politics. Appearances had been served by the former concubines' departure from Kyoto. So long as GoYōzei remained unaware of what had happened to Nakako, there was nothing to be gained by insisting on moving her and O-Yasu to Nijima, and Ieyasu seems wisely to have decided to leave well enough alone.



Several of our characters leave the stage during Nakako's fourteen-year-long exile. Nakanoin Michikatsu was the first to die, in the spring of 1610. Later that year Hosokawa Yūsai, who had been ailing throughout the summer, died in Kyoto. He was seventy-six years old. The following year, on 1611.3.27, Emperor GoYōzei finally abdicated.<sup>20</sup> He had never been an easy man, and the dragon-scale scandal had only exacerbated his peevishness. In an account of events leading up to the abdication, former Chancellor Konoe Nobutada complained, "His Majesty's behavior and judgment have become utterly incomprehensible."<sup>21</sup> Relations with his mother and a number of his courtiers broke down completely. To make matters worse,

the abdication, originally scheduled for the third month of 1610, had to be postponed when Ieyasu begged leave to grieve over the death of a young daughter. GoYōzei promptly upped the ante by insisting that both the coming-of-age ceremony for the prince who would succeed him as emperor and his own abdication ceremony be conducted on the same day, like the ceremonies held when Emperor Daigo succeeded his father, Emperor Uda, at the end of the ninth century. But his desire that the present be made to conform to this earlier perceived golden age of imperial power was delusional. Ieyasu had ordered that the coming-of-age ceremony be conducted before the end of the year, with the abdication and enthronement ceremonies to follow in the New Year, and since he was paying, the court would have to comply. Eventually, after last-minute intervention by GoYōzei's brothers and his mother's clever interpretation of the emperor's "happen what may" as a form of assent, the ceremonies went ahead in the order that Ieyasu had specified.<sup>22</sup> Once again, GoYōzei had taken on the shogunate and lost.

The Tokugawa did build him a separate palace, however, where as retired emperor he lingered a further six years, until 1617.8.26. With all that had happened during his life—from his baptism by fire on the night of Nobunaga's assassination through his sudden elevation to the throne after his father, Prince Sanehito's, unexpected death; from Hideyoshi's obsequious currying of favor via imperial progresses and other displays of devotion through Ieyasu's more uncompromising attitude during the dragon-scale scandal and the abdication crisis—it comes as a surprise to realize that he was only forty-six years old when he died.

Nakako's brother Michimura recorded the retired emperor's deathbed poem in his diary:

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>uki aki no</i>         | This dismal autumn          |
| <i>mushi no nakine no</i> | is it the waning cries of   |
| <i>aware ya mo</i>        | insects that move me?       |
| <i>ima mi no ue ni</i>    | No: it is that I know       |
| <i>kagiri to zo omou</i>  | I am on the point of death. |

The poem is prefaced by Michimura's somewhat perfunctory-sounding observation, "the assembled courtiers wept in desolation and found it difficult to suppress their tears."<sup>23</sup>

Without a doubt the most momentous events during GoYōzei's retirement were the two Osaka campaigns that resulted in the final destruction of the Toyotomi clan by the Tokugawa. The first campaign took place over

the winter of 1614–15 and ended when the Toyotomi agreed to allow the outer moat around their massive fortress in Osaka to be filled in. The second campaign was fought during the summer of 1615 and culminated in a siege of Osaka Castle, the largest battle ever fought on Japanese soil. There were about 90,000 men on the Toyotomi side, many of them ronin cast adrift by the confiscation and reallocation of feudal domains in the years after the Battle of Sekigahara, set against Tokugawa armies estimated at 100,000 strong. Once Toyotomi Hideyori and his mother rejected Ieyasu's demand that either the ronin be expelled or the castle surrendered, all hope of a negotiated settlement was at an end. The Tokugawa attacked and, in Totman's memorable description, "laboriously bombarded, burned, bargained, battered, and butchered their way in."<sup>24</sup>

The complex web of alliances that characterized warrior society meant that many families had members on both sides. Perhaps none was so tragically divided as the three Azai sisters, daughters of Oda Nobunaga's younger sister Ichi and her husband, Azai Nagamasa.<sup>25</sup> The Azai had been wiped out when they sided with another family against Nobunaga, but Ichi and her daughters were spared. The three daughters were spared again when their mother's next husband, Shibata Katsuie, rebelled against Hideyoshi, but this time Ichi chose to die with her husband rather than submit to her late brother's successor, whom she despised. True to form, Hideyoshi made the most of his prizes. The eldest of the three girls, Chacha, eventually became his favorite concubine and the mother of his heir, Hideyori. The second, Hatsu, was married into the Kyōgoku family, a prominent branch of the Ashikaga clan. And the youngest, Gō, had been married, divorced, remarried, and widowed all before the age of twenty-two, when she was married off for a third and final time, to Tokugawa Ieyasu's heir Hidetada. Needless to say, things did not go according to Hideyoshi's plan. At the Battle of Sekigahara, the Kyōgoku sided with the Tokugawa against the Toyotomi. And the fact that Gō's eldest daughter by Hidetada, Sen, was married to her first cousin Hideyori did not stop the Tokugawa from moving against the Toyotomi. As they tightened their grip on Osaka Castle, it became increasingly difficult to see how all three sisters and their children could survive. The widowed Hatsu was caught in the middle as she shuttled back and forth, negotiating for the Toyotomi with Acha, one of Ieyasu's concubines, acting for the Tokugawa. In the end, it was Chacha and her son Hideyori who died, committing suicide as Osaka Castle burned around them. Hideyori's son and daughter, both the

children of concubines, were captured alive and came to very different, if equivalent ends: the son was executed and the daughter was confined for the rest of her life in a Kamakura convent. Both the actual and the symbolic deaths ensured that neither had children who could claim the Toyotomi lineage. On Ieyasu's orders, so the story goes, his granddaughter Sen was retrieved and returned to the Tokugawa. The very next year, she was re-used in another political marriage, this time to a Tokugawa vassal.

The Toyotomi had finally been obliterated. With them perished a large number of ronin, whose rowdy, disruptive presence in cities and castle towns would not be missed. This time, the wars really were over. Ieyasu lost no time in promulgating a series of statutes governing the conduct, both public and private, of the elite of Tokugawa society. The first was the *Regulations for the Military Houses*, issued on 1615.7.7; the second the *Regulations for the Emperor and Nobility*, issued ten days later, on 1615.7.17; and the third a series of *Regulations for Sects and Temples*, issued piecemeal through 1665.<sup>26</sup> With the reckless behavior of those caught up in the dragon-scale scandal still fresh in the memories of many, it is not surprising that the emperor and his courtiers were exhorted to spend their time “engaged in the arts,” by which Ieyasu meant studying works on good government and composing poetry. The *Regulations* also specified that nobles were to be punished by banishment—not by the death penalty that GoYōzei had attempted to impose.

In the aftermath of the Osaka campaigns and the promulgation of the *Regulations*, Ieyasu was in a celebratory mood. He decided to have Nakanoin Michimura—twenty-seven years old in 1615—summoned to his study in Nijō Castle, the Tokugawa headquarters in Kyoto, to give some lectures on *The Tale of Genji*.<sup>27</sup> The summons must have been unexpected, for when word reached Michimura on 7.18, he was at the Konoe mansion, enjoying a drink after lecturing on *Genji* to Empress Mother Sakiko. He immediately went home to sober up, then headed out again to consult with his literary mentors about how best to approach the sudden commission. On 7.20, kneeling on the veranda outside the eight-mat room in which Ieyasu was seated, Michimura gave his first lecture, on selected passages from chapter 23, “The Warbler’s First Song.” It was a carefully auspicious choice: the action is set on a “bright and perfectly cloudless” New Year’s Day when “people’s hearts . . . naturally seemed to swell with gladness,”<sup>28</sup> and describes the hero at the peak of his power making the rounds of his women in the various wings of his Rokujō mansion. The parallels between

Genji's command of his world and Ieyasu and the new order he had so recently established are obvious—though no less flattering for that. Among the allusions that Michimura would have elucidated for his audience is this one, to a poem from the tenth-century *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*:

|                           |                                              |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <i>yorozu yo o</i>        | We celebrate your                            |
| <i>matsu ni zo kimi o</i> | living the pine tree's myriad years,         |
| <i>iwaitsuru</i>          | for like the crane,                          |
| <i>chitose no kage ni</i> | we wish to make our homes                    |
| <i>sumamu to omoeba</i>   | beneath your millennial shade. <sup>29</sup> |

The pine that lives for ten thousand years, the crane that lives for a thousand, the grateful subjects sheltering beneath the great tree (read: Tokugawa Ieyasu)—the poem conveniently voices every felicitation on the recent consolidation of regime that a courtier might wish to express.

For whatever reason, Michimura was not overly anxious to continue his lectures to Ieyasu; on 7.21 and 7.22 he declined to present himself on the grounds that “his wife was attending performances of Noh.”<sup>30</sup> Pressed to return, however, he relented and on 7.29 and 8.2 lectured on sections from chapter 2, “The Broom Tree.” Two days later, Ieyasu left the capital to journey back to Sunpu. Michimura's three lectures on *Genji* seem to have been the last formal literary activities of Ieyasu's life.<sup>31</sup> He died less than a year later, aged seventy-three. In summoning Michimura to lecture to him on *Genji*, the retired shogun had not simply taken time out after an arduous military campaign to listen to sections from a good book. He had quite deliberately associated himself in a very public way with a great Japanese classic that was central to the court he now attempted to control. Learning had always been associated with fitness to govern in East Asia.<sup>32</sup> Commissioning the *Genji* lectures from Michimura was one more step in the long process of legitimating Tokugawa rule over Japan.

## MICHIMURA TRAVELS TO EDO

Nakako's brother Michimura's career was now flourishing. Konoe Nobutada had been Emperor GoMizuno'o's teacher of Japanese poetry, but when the former chancellor died toward the end of 1614, Michimura, with



Portrait of Nakako's elder brother, Nakanoin Michimura, by an unknown artist. Hanging scroll (110.2 x 46.9 cm), mid seventeenth century.

KYOTO UNIVERSITY MUSEUM



his second cousin and father's protégé Sanjōnishi Sane'eda, was chosen to replace him.<sup>33</sup> In 1617, Michimura was promoted to senior third rank and appointed acting middle counselor, the highest rank and office achieved by his father. Further promotions in rank and office eventually elevated him to palace minister in 1647, the most senior post attained by a member of the Nakanoin family for two hundred years.<sup>34</sup> Like his forebears, from time to time he seems to have supplemented his stipend by producing manuscripts of various sorts for payment.<sup>35</sup> As a reward for Michimura's lectures to Ieyasu in 1615, the retired shogun had ordered that the courtier be awarded a raise of 100 *koku*, bringing his annual stipend up to 300 *koku*. (In 1703, the Nakanoin stipend was raised again, to an "unprecedented" 500 *koku*.)<sup>36</sup>

Michimura also continued to lecture on *Genji*: to GoMizuno'o, and to the Empress Mother Konoe Sakiko. In 1622, he carefully recorded an exchange of poems that marked the end of one of these cycles of lectures.<sup>37</sup>

The Empress Mother:

|                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>akanaku mo</i>       | At an end too soon!             |
| <i>sara ni mihatenu</i> | I feel that there must be more  |
| <i>kokochi shite</i>    | I have yet to see;              |
| <i>nagori o omou</i>    | how I hate for it to end        |
| <i>yume no ukihashi</i> | this floating bridge of dreams. |

In response, [I wrote]:

|                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>uchiwatasu</i>        | Stretched out before us         |
| <i>yume no ukihashi</i>  | this floating bridge of dreams: |
| <i>kyō wa nao</i>        | today let us cross o'er         |
| <i>ureshiki se ni mo</i> | and discover the more joyful    |
| <i>kakete miru kana</i>  | rapids that lie beyond.         |

Konoe Sakiko expresses sentiments familiar to many readers of *Genji*: the tale is over too soon, and the last chapter, "The Floating Bridge of Dreams," ends on an agonizingly inconclusive note. Michimura's response attempts to put a positive gloss on her complaint, while at the same time alluding to one of his father's poems, also composed at the end of a series of lectures on *Genji*:

|                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>uchiwatasu</i>                     | Stretched out before us,              |
| <i>sono na bakari wa</i>              | but the very name itself—             |
| <i>ika naran</i>                      | what does it mean?                    |
| <i>waga mi ni tadoru</i>              | This floating bridge of dreams        |
| <i>yume no ukihashi</i> <sup>38</sup> | that I myself have strained to reach. |

Michikatsu's poem is rather about the title of the last chapter, which is the only one in the tale that does not originate in a poem or prose passage in the chapter itself.

Toward the end of the same year, Emperor GoMizuno'o entrusted Michimura with an important mission. He was to travel to Edo to congratulate Shogun Hidetada on his removal to the newly constructed central enceinte of Edo Castle.<sup>39</sup> Michimura recalled:

In the eleventh month of Genna 8 [1622], in compliance with a sudden imperial command, I set out for the Kanto. . . . On the second day of the twelfth month, I arrived in Mishima. From here on, so they say, is the province of Izu. Some years earlier my younger sister was banished to an island of this province and is still there. Thus it was that I recalled Genji's words, "had we not been blessed by the aid of that god who dwells in the sea"—and her situation being the same, I prayed in my heart:

|                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>umi ni masu</i>       | Though you may not be that     |
| <i>kami narazu to mo</i> | "god who dwells in the sea,"   |
| <i>toshi nami no</i>     | pray pity the one              |
| <i>nagare nomi iku</i>   | who is swept away by the       |
| <i>hito o awareme</i>    | current of those waves of age. |

Michimura's poem alludes to one spoken by Genji in the "Akashi" chapter of the novel. Banished to Suma for his misdeeds—which include an affair with his elder brother Emperor Suzaku's favorite concubine—Genji and his small band of companions are assailed by rain and hail, then the thunder and lightning of a terrifying storm. Only Genji's prayers to the God of Sumiyoshi bring relief. Once the worst has passed, Genji "opened his brushwood door and contemplated the still-violently lunging and receding surf," only to hear the humble sea folk around him say, "If the wind had gone on much longer, the tide would have swallowed up everything. . . . The gods were kind."<sup>40</sup> Genji responds with this poem:



*umi ni masu*  
*kami no tasuke ni*  
*kakarazu wa*  
*shio no yaoai ni*  
*sasuraenamashi*<sup>41</sup>

Had I not been so  
 blessed by the aid of that  
 god who dwells in the sea,  
 I should have been swept away  
 on the currents of the deep.

Soon after, the Akashi Novice arrives in a small boat, and Genji is taken to safety across the water. Michimura's poem is thus more apropos of Nakako's situation than he perhaps imagined—for thirteen years earlier, she had indeed been "swept away by the current." And, like Genji, she survived and was provided with a safe haven in which to spend her exile. But Michimura appears not to know this; on the evidence of the headnote to his poem, he still thinks that his sister is on the island to which she was banished.

After leaving Mishima, the Eastern Sea Road rises through the mountains to Hakone and descends again to the coast at Odawara. Between Odawara and Ōiso it runs along the shore of Sagami Bay, from where on a fine day one can see the Izu Islands. The largest of them, Ōshima, is about thirty-seven miles in the offing; Nijima, beyond and to the right of it, is about sixty miles out. Even in the less than pristine atmospheric conditions of the twenty-first century, the islands are clearly visible. Michimura wrote:

Looking out to sea after leaving Odawara, one sees hills on the islands in the offing. Hearing that these were in that same province [of Izu], I thought perhaps that might be where she was. And recalling how the late Middle Counselor [that is, Michikatsu] had wept upon composing the poem:

*omoiyaru*  
*tayori mo nami no*  
*suteobune*  
*kokoro aru ama no*  
*kotozute mo ga na*

No word from her,  
 cast away like an abandoned  
 boat upon the waves;  
 would that some kind fisherman  
 might bring news of her to me.

[I wrote]:

*hiku hito no*  
*arade ya tsui ni*

Perhaps with no one  
 to pull it in, it will end up

|                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>araiso no</i>        | rotting in the waves                |
| <i>nami ni kuchinan</i> | that crash against the rocky coast: |
| <i>ama no sutebune</i>  | the fisher's cast-off boat.         |

The first of these two verses, then, is by Michikatsu, recording his despair (*No word from her!*) and comparing his banished daughter to a little abandoned boat (*suteobune*). He must have written it just before he went into his final decline. The second poem is Michimura's response to his father. On first reading it seems a gloomy verse, full of death and decay. Unless, that is, Michimura plans to discuss the release of his sister with the shogunal authorities while he is in Edo. Is he about to become the one who will "pull in" that "cast-off boat"? His next poem reveals that there is something he would very much like her to know.

And this time too, resigning myself to not even hearing any news of her[,  
I wrote]:

|                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>ika ni shite</i>                   | How might I ever—                 |
| <i>yosonagara dani</i>                | even only from afar—              |
| <i>hahakigi no</i>                    | at least let her know             |
| <i>ari to bakari o</i>                | that her mother, the broom tree,  |
| <i>hito ni shirasen</i> <sup>42</sup> | has not vanished but still lives? |

The siblings' mother, Michikatsu's widow, is still alive.

## REPRIEVE

In 1623, on the fifth of the ninth month, word arrived in Sunpu that Nakako had been pardoned and would be allowed to return to the capital.<sup>43</sup> The other four former concubines were also to be released. None of the courtiers still in exile was reprieved at this time. Women were of lesser importance, not fully responsible for their actions, so there was no harm in setting them free.

Amnesties were granted by the Tokugawa shogunate on a variety of occasions, auspicious and inauspicious: the accession or death of an emperor, the granting by the court of the title shogun, the marriage or death of a shogun, the birth of a child to a shogun.<sup>44</sup> One possible reason for Nakako's pardon was to mark the important "seventh anniversary"

(*nanakaiki*) of GoYōzei's death on 1617.8.26 with a merciful act, the karmic merit of which would be directed to his spirit. (Counting the year of death as one means that the seventh anniversary is actually commemorated *six* years after a person's death.) Perhaps Michimura was able to negotiate Nakako's pardon using this karmic justification as a bargaining tool.

Another possible reason for the pardon was to gratify the court for its granting of the title of shogun to Iemitsu, son of the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada, on 1623.7.27. Both Iemitsu and his father traveled to the capital for the requisite ceremonies.<sup>45</sup> During their visit, the men paid separate, formal calls on Masako, Emperor GoMizuno'o's consort. Masako was Iemitsu's sister, the youngest of Hidetada's seven children by his wife Azai Gō. In a "feat of audacity" comparable to Hideyoshi's assumption of the title of chancellor thirty-five years earlier, the Tokugawa had used their economic and political clout to forge a connection with the imperial family through the body of one of their daughters.<sup>46</sup> In the sixth month of 1620, aged thirteen, Masako entered the court of GoMizuno'o. All appeared to be going according to plan: three years later, when she saw her father and brother again, she was pregnant with her first child by the emperor. Whether for an expectant imperial consort or a deceased former emperor or both, the timing of the amnesty seemed propitious.

### O-YASU'S STORY

When Nakako arrived in Nijō toward the end of the tenth month of 1609, she was a young woman of eighteen or nineteen. By 1623, she was in her early thirties. As she prepared to leave Nijō and return to Kyoto, local lore records that she had to bid farewell to her maidservant, O-Yasu. Together the two women had survived shipwreck and the long years of exile; indeed, because they were banished together, it is possible that O-Yasu had been Nakako's personal maid at the imperial palace and was implicated in the dragon-scale scandal like her mistress. By the time the two were reprieved in 1623, they might easily have known each other for more than twenty years. But O-Yasu did not return to Kyoto with Nakako because—so legend has it—she was pregnant. Who the father of her child was, no one seems to know, except that he was a local man, one who—for reasons that will become clear in a moment—is thought to have been in service to the Kutta-Suzuki.

From Nijō, Nakako walked the four *ri*, or about ten miles, to the port of Shimoda. The first part of the journey is rugged, but the distance can be covered in a single day. We must assume that Nakako was escorted by knowledgeable local guides, in the company of an official or two. In Shimoda, she boarded a boat that took her back up the coast to Ajiro. From there she would have traveled inland via Sunpu to join the road that—this time—she would follow westward for some 80 *ri*, about 195 miles, to Kyoto.<sup>47</sup> At some point, perhaps in Ajiro, she was reunited with her four coconspirators who had spent their exile on Niiijima. The women arrived back in the capital on 1623.9.27, three months (there was an extra intercalary eighth month this year) to the day since Iemitsu had been appointed shogun.<sup>48</sup>

It seems unlikely that O-Yasu, who was in the last month of her pregnancy, went with Nakako all the way into Shimoda, much though she may have wanted to postpone their farewell until the last possible moment. Suzuki writes that O-Yasu said good-bye to her mistress in Nijō, and that Nakako gave her a dagger by the Mino (present-day Gifu Prefecture) swordsmith Seki Kanetaka as a parting gift. O-Yasu then left to hide herself away in the neighboring village of Aoichi. Other local people believe that O-Yasu did accompany Nakako to Shimoda, and that she was on her way back when she came to grief. Her body heavy with child and desolate from their parting, so the legend goes, O-Yasu was alone when suddenly she was stricken with labor pains. She struggled on, but eventually she was unable to carry herself any farther and, just out of sight of the hamlet of Kamigumi, she collapsed on the bank of a stream. A large stone still marks the spot today. By the time she was discovered by a passing villager, poor O-Yasu was in agony, powerless to fend off the swarms of crabs and mosquitoes that assailed her. Alas, the ministrations of the villagers were to no avail. O-Yasu died; and with her died her unborn child.

Carefully the villagers buried O-Yasu's body and began to offer incense and flowers with their prayers at her grave. As the years went by, her spirit came to be worshipped as one that would ensure a safe delivery in childbirth. (The transformation from sufferer to savior is a common one in Japanese folk beliefs.) A small shrine, the Koyasu (easy delivery) Shrine, was built in a clearing halfway up the steep slope behind Kamigumi, and more than a hundred narrow stone steps were wedged into the mountainside to lead the worshipper up to it. For generations the Yasugedan-Takahashi family acted as the shrine's guardians (their cognomen means



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The stone steps that lead up to the former site of Koyasu (easy delivery) Shrine in Kamigumi, Izu.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR



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Wooden statue of a mother and child from the former Koyasu Shrine, now housed in the Kamigumi Mishima Shrine, Izu.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

“the Takahashi at the steps below Yasu’s”), but the building and its maintenance were paid for by the Kutta-Suzuki family. Surely, local people reckon, the Suzuki wouldn’t have gone to all that expense and trouble if they hadn’t felt responsible for what happened to O-Yasu; they conclude that it must have been one of their retainers who was the father of her child.

Until recently, O-Yasu’s dagger—presumably the one given her by Nakako—was kept at the shrine, but its present whereabouts are unknown. By 1997, the annual festival day on February 15 was no longer celebrated and the shrine building had fallen into disrepair. The Suzuki family generously offered to finance a complete renovation, but the approach to the shrine is so precipitous that the aging populace of the hamlet decided to decline. And so the small inner shrine containing a painted wooden statue of a plump young woman dressed in court robes and holding a baby was removed and incorporated into the nearby Kamigumi Mishima Shrine. The present head of the family, Takahashi Katsumi, continues to weed the grounds and sweep the paths where once the Koyasu Shrine stood. His mother, Granny Sada, who had cared for the shrine throughout her life and lived well into her nineties, liked to recall:

It’s thanks to Koyasu-san that I’m hale and hearty. In the old days there’d be a big banner flying on festival days, the old man from Kadoshin would sell buckwheat noodles, and the lantern-making woman would come around selling sweets; it was pretty lively, let me tell you!<sup>49</sup>

Rural Japan is full of old people’s stories like this, about an era—now only just within living memory—before children and grandchildren left for jobs in the cities and the countryside was abandoned.

Suzuki Tsutomu imagines the scene as Nakako left Nijō:

Dressing hurriedly in traveling garb, she gave Shōemon and his family two swords by the first-generation Sukesada of the Osafune school of swordsmiths from Bizen, in gratitude for the long years they had cared for her. She put the other keepsakes in a small paulownia-wood box and presented them to Shōemon. Pierced like an arrow with yearning for home, she had already said good-bye to her maid, O-Yasu; now the time had come to taste the pain of parting from the familiar villagers, none of whom she would ever see again. They waved their hands again and again as they watched her disappear into the distance. She walked on, heading

westward toward the capital. If only we could see into their hearts at that moment and know what each of them was feeling!<sup>150</sup>

It is interesting that in this account, Nakako has three swords: the dagger (*tantō*) she gives to O-Yasu, and two longer swords, described as *katana*, that she leaves with the Suzuki family. One of the long swords was probably the *tachi* given her by her father when she was born, an acknowledgment of his paternity. The other seems superfluous—unless, perhaps, it was a gift from her mother, who was of the Isshiki warrior family. Unfortunately, Nakako's two long swords were confiscated during the Allied Occupation of Japan after World War II. The villagers of Nijō have tried through various bureaucratic channels to trace the swords and have them returned, but, alas, they too seem to have disappeared.







Portrait of Abbess Mumu Jishō, the former imperial concubine Nishinotōin Tokiko, painted by her daughter Abbess Setsugai Eisō, 1658. This is as close as we can come to a sense of what Nakako may have looked like in her later life as a nun.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

# Chapter 8

## SALVATION

*nyūdō no  
kane hibikikureba  
kesa tsukete  
narabu itama no  
ashiura tsumetashi*

As the prayer gong  
sounds, I don my surplice  
and join the line,  
the soles of my feet chilled  
by the wooden boards<sup>1</sup>

—ABBESS KASANOIN JIKUN, IN IRIS FIELDS



he Kyoto to which Nakako returned was a more secure, more prosperous city than the one she had left 14 years earlier. It was also a more crowded city, with an estimated population of at least 400,000—the vast majority of them commoners—through the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Despite the resources expended developing the Tokugawa headquarters of Edo, Kyoto remained the cultural and intellectual heart of Japan at least until the end of the century. Their bills paid by the shogunate, members of the imperial family were once again important patrons of all kinds of arts and crafts, from architecture and painting to garden design and the weaving of kimono fabric.<sup>3</sup>

## MICHIMURA IN THE WORLD

Soon after Nakako arrived back in the capital, her elder brother Michimura was appointed to the important position of military liaison officer, responsible for mediating between the court and the shogunate. He would hold the post for almost seven years, from 1623.10.28 until the ninth month of 1630.<sup>4</sup> But unfortunately, Nakako herself disappears from the

historical record for more than a decade. Most likely she spent these years living quietly at home with her mother, her brother and sister-in-law, and their children. Michimura had followed his father in marrying a woman from a warrior family. Her personal name is not known, but we do know that she was the daughter of Mizoguchi Hōki-no-Kami Hidekatsu, the first daimyo of the Shibata domain in the province of Echigo, part of present-day Niigata Prefecture, and that she was seven years older than her husband.<sup>5</sup> From this distance, it is impossible to retrieve Michimura's motives—or indeed whether he had any say at all in the matter of his marriage. If he did, it is conceivable that he felt a woman from a warrior family would get along better with his samurai mother.

Michimura and his wife had two children that we know of, a son born 1612.8.28 and known after he came of age as Michizumi, and a daughter born in 1617. When their aunt returned to Kyoto from Nijō in 1623, they would have been eleven and six. One imagines there was a lot to talk about, especially among the women, for all three of them—mother, daughter, and Michimura's wife—had seen something of life outside the capital and so had experiences very different from other women in their world.

For the Nakanoin, the most dramatic events of these years were undoubtedly the sudden abdication of Emperor GoMizuno'ō on 1629.11.8; the elevation of his eldest child by Tokugawa Masako to the position of emperor; and Michimura's subsequent punishment by the shogunate for failing to anticipate GoMizuno'ō's plans and inform the authorities accordingly. An imperial-Tokugawa child on the throne had been the ambition of Masako's family since Ieyasu's day, and the reason they had installed her as GoMizuno'ō's consort in 1620. By 1629, she had given birth to five children and been promoted to empress, but both of the boys who might have become heir apparent had died. That meant the longed-for imperial-Tokugawa emperor was a girl, six-year-old Princess Okiko, the first female emperor in 800 years. Meishō, as she became, reigned for 14 years before abdicating in favor of her younger half-brother Prince Tsuguhito, GoMizuno'ō's eldest surviving son, whose mother was one of his numerous palace attendants.<sup>6</sup> There was no question of Meishō ever marrying, and she had no descendants. From Iemitsu's appointment as shogun onward, the traffic in women went the other way: the official consorts (*midaidokoro*) of the Tokugawa shoguns were always noblewomen, if not by birth, then at least by adoption. GoMizuno'ō succeeded where GoYōzei had failed, for his surprise abdication eventually forced the Tokugawa to

accept the reestablishment of the retired emperor system, first formalized in the eleventh century.<sup>7</sup> As retired emperor, GoMizuno'o presided over the imperial court and the reigns of four of his children for 50 years, until his death in 1680 at the age of 84.<sup>8</sup>

The shogunate punished Michimura on two separate occasions. First, on 1630.9.15, he was dismissed from his post as military liaison officer. The court responded by promoting him to senior second rank the following year. Then, in 1635, he and his son Michizumi were summoned to Edo and held at the Tokugawa family temple, Kan'eiji, under conditions of house arrest for six months. Both the official history and Michimura's own poetic record are deliberately vague about the reasons for this second punishment. Shogunal historians note the men's release on 1635.10.1 and their receipt of 130 pieces of silver and 16 kimono—presumably a form of apology—the following day, but that is all. Michimura documents only the poems he received from GoMizuno'o and his audience with the shogun.<sup>9</sup> Among the explanations that have been offered is that Michimura was detained for refusing to impart the *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū* to Iemitsu, on the grounds that the shogun was “insufficiently qualified.”<sup>10</sup> Another anecdote is found in Yamamoto Tsunetomo's *Hagakure*, an anachronistic tract on “the Way of the Warrior” compiled in the second decade of the eighteenth century:

During the reign of Emperor GoMizuno'o, Lord Nakanoin Michimura . . . went down to Edo as Imperial Envoy; and when he was to enter the castle, he refused to alight from his palanquin. The guards told him it was established custom to do so. To which Lord Michimura replied, “Do you expect me to alight merely to conform to the custom of someone ignorant of the law? There is no law stating that an Imperial Envoy shall alight from his palanquin.” But the guards would not hear of it; so Michimura said, “Then I shall be unable to accomplish my mission as Imperial Envoy.” Whereupon he turned back and left the castle. For this he was confined to the liaison officers' lodge for three years.<sup>11</sup>

The account given in *Hagakure* is almost certainly apocryphal. But both stories have a similar appeal in their depiction of Nakako's brother as unflinchingly loyal to the emperor he served and the court he represented. Surely that was the rub as far as the shogunal authorities were concerned.

## A WORLD OF WOMEN, II

Nakako reappears in 1641. Eighteen years after her release from exile, on 1641.11.3, she entered the aristocratic convent Hōji'in. A week later, on 11.10, she took vows; her hair was cut and her head shaved, and she became a nun.<sup>12</sup> Nakako was about fifty years old when she embarked upon this, the last journey of her life. Why might she have decided—or agreed—to become a nun? And why now?

Women had become nuns since soon after the introduction of Buddhism to Japan from Korea in the mid-sixth century.<sup>13</sup> Although state-sponsored nunneries were a short-lived phenomenon, throughout the medieval and early modern periods, large numbers of aristocratic and upwardly mobile samurai women underwent private ordination ceremonies and lived as lay nuns either at home or in small, independent convents. Lay nuns vowed to observe the Five Precepts that forbade killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication. For these women, ordination was “a means of gaining karmic merit, of displaying Buddhist devotion, and of asserting [their] own sophistication.”<sup>14</sup> The decision to renounce the secular world and enter contemplative life could be prompted by a variety of events: the failure of a love affair or the wish to keep an unwanted suitor at bay; the death of a child, widowhood, or old age; as well as sudden religious awakening or the fulfillment of long-standing spiritual conviction. It was also an expected rite of passage for women who had been the wives or concubines of powerful men.

We do not know precisely what combination of factors prompted Nakako to enter the Hōji'in when she did. In part, it may have been because the Nakanoin were flourishing and there was not much for her to do at home anymore. Both her brother and her sister-in-law were still alive and well; her niece and nephew had grown up and married; she even had several grandnephews and a grandniece, the children of Michimura's son Michizumi. The Nakanoin mansion at the northeast corner of the courtiers' quarter had perhaps become a little cramped for comfort, and whatever space she occupied was needed for somebody else. Entering a convent would give her plenty to do as well as a space of her own in which to do it.

Doubtless there were other reasons for her decision. According to the Hōji'in death register, the abbess who immediately preceded Nakako died only three months before her successor took vows.<sup>15</sup> A replacement was

needed. Although we do not know exactly when Nakako was appointed abbess or how long she served in the position, it is clear that the job came with a certain cachet as well as a secure livelihood. That “living” was in the gift of the aristocratic Hino family. Many years earlier, Hino Teruko had been a colleague of Nakako’s in the Bureau of Palace Attendants; more recently, Teruko’s elder brother Sukekatsu had taken over Michimura’s position as military liaison officer.<sup>16</sup> So there seems to have been connection enough between the Hino and the Nakanoin for the matter to be broached by one side or the other, and for a suitable introduction to the Hōji’in to be arranged.<sup>17</sup>

The nuns in Kyoto with whom I have discussed Nakako’s story pointed out that entering a convent would have enabled her to have a life of her own, independent of her family. Japanese convents were walled, but nuns were not enclosed in the same way as their counterparts in Counter-Reformation Catholic Europe; Buddhist convents were not “sepulchers of stone” that women entered but were never supposed to leave.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, becoming a nun allowed a woman to lead an active life without attracting unwelcome attention; around town nuns were commonplace, completely normal, and thus inconspicuous. As the vice-superior of one convent suggested to me, the Hōji’in would have provided Nakako with a respectable place in the world that was comfortable, both physically and psychologically.<sup>19</sup>

The Hōji’in has always been a small institution. Most likely it began life as a subtemple of the great Keiai-ji, founded by the nun Muge Nyodai in the late thirteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Nyodai had been a disciple of the Chinese monk Wuxue Zuyuan (Jp. Mugaku Sogen), one of a number of Chinese Chan (Jp. Zen) masters who moved to Japan in the mid thirteenth century and were patronized by the Hōjō regents of the Kamakura shoguns.<sup>21</sup> Wuxue arrived in Japan in 1279, was installed as abbot of the Zen monastery Kenchō-ji in Kamakura, and then in 1282 became the founding abbot of the Engaku-ji, built to pacify the souls of those who had died during the attempted Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281. After Wuxue’s death in 1286, Nyodai moved from Kamakura to Kyoto, found powerful patrons of her own, and established the Keiai-ji as the foremost Zen convent for women in the capital. It burned down in 1498 and was never rebuilt, but such was its symbolic importance that for almost 400 years after its destruction, until the abolition of state support for Buddhism in the early 1870s, the headship of the temple was succeeded to by the superiors of two of its “daughter temples,” the Hōkyō-ji and the Daishō-ji.<sup>22</sup> The Hōji’in

survived as the repository of important Keiaiji artifacts: a magnificent wooden statue of Amitābha Buddha (Jp. Amida, the Buddha of Immeasurable Light) in a seated position dating from the twelfth century; and two smaller wooden statues from the late thirteenth century, one of Muge Nyodai and the other of her teacher Wuxue Zuyuan. Both are extraordinarily lifelike. The purpose of such effigies was to “convey the essence of the master” to his or her disciples after death, and indeed the statue of Nyodai does “emanate the powerful life spirit” of this Zen nun.<sup>23</sup>

When Nakako became a nun she took the religious name Rankei Shūhō, meaning “valley of orchids, all-pervading fragrance.” “Rankei” is clearly taken from the name of another Chinese Chan master, Lanxi Daolong (Jp. Rankei Dōryū), who arrived in Japan in 1246 and was the founding abbot of the Kenchōji in Kamakura. He also lived for three years in Kyoto, where he brought his Chan background to bear on the Zen monasteries Kenninji and Tōfukuji.<sup>24</sup> Nakako’s religious name indicates that she belonged to the lineage he established, but it has so far proved impossible to discover just who administered her vows.

To become a nun is, ideally, to put an end to one’s sexual self, to liberate oneself from the burden of inhabiting a body that desires and is desired by others. The present abbess of the Hōji’in, Shibata Shōrei, explained it to me this way: to become a nun is “to cast off one’s womanhood”; the break with one’s sex is more complete, more final, than it is for men who become monks, and the rules of religious life are stricter for women. Nuns, though they may once have been married, are required to renounce completely their conjugal ties upon taking vows and may not enter into new ones. Shōrei also gave me this example of the need she felt for help with the daily struggle to overcome her femininity: some years ago, when she agreed to become vice-superior of the Hōji’in, she changed her religious name from Anyū (“abundant peace”) to Shōrei (“respectful felicity”). She wanted a new name that sounded “harder” and “more masculine,” she said, to help her in her new role. She asked a learned monk of her acquaintance to come up with a name and when he did, she adopted it. The religious name of the retired abbess of the Hōji’in, Gakushō (“light of learning”), is likewise perceived as a hard and thus masculine name.<sup>25</sup>

To become a nun is also to join a community of women. The “surfeit” of daughters born to emperors in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries led to the revival of old convents and the founding of new ones.<sup>26</sup> Imperial-born abbesses were joined by women who had been the concu-



bines of emperors and were the mothers of imperial children—like Nakako's former colleague Hei no Naishi, Nishinotōin Tokiko, who took vows after Emperor GoYozei's death and refounded the Honkōin convent nearby the Daishōji, where her daughter by GoYōzei was abbess.<sup>27</sup>

Imperial convents were, therefore, spaces where religious and aristocratic cultures met and fused.<sup>28</sup> Both of the Hōji'in's sister convents, the Daishōji and the Hōkyōji, were the recipients of excess imperial daughters from the fourteenth century onward; and the Hōkyōji's large collection of dolls, games, and toys is testimony to the extreme youth of many of the girls who were immured there from early childhood. Theirs was a privileged enclōsterment to be sure; of hand-painted sets of cards that helped them learn the names of birds and plants; of memorizing Japanese poetry, from the primer *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each* through the 1,100 poems of the *Collection of Ancient and Modern Poems*; of the romances *Tales of Ise* and *The Tale of Genji*. (Though one nun recalled that she did not actually read these tales until she was in her thirties—by which point she had presumably developed a properly Buddhist perspective on the amorous adventures they describe!) Novices also studied the Confucian classics and important works from the Buddhist canon.<sup>29</sup> They were trained to speak the language of the imperial palace, with its distinctive vocabulary developed by the women of the Bureau of Palace Attendants; their voices, rather like that of Lear's Cordelia, were conditioned to be "ever soft, / Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman."<sup>30</sup> It may strike us today as an odd combination of the rigorous and the refined, with an admixture of conventional feminine delicacy. But with the exception of the Buddhist works, their education was typical of that afforded elite women in early modern Japan.

A convent day is organized something like this:

5 A.M.: nuns rise and rinse their mouths, present offerings of food to the Buddha, then perform their morning devotions.

8:30–9 A.M.: breakfast.

9 A.M.: prayers for deceased former superiors and their parents.

Midday meal.

4 P.M.: remove the morning holy water; silent reading of sutras; service for the repose of those dead who have no one else to pray for them.

After dinner, free conversation about the day's events, and practice of artistic pursuits.

9 P.M. retire.<sup>31</sup>



Such was the daily routine of the abbess of Daishōji Imperial Convent in the late 1950s; as we shall see, Nakako's routine at the Hōji'in three hundred years earlier differed in various respects. But I think we are safe in supposing that even in the mid twentieth century, Daishōji preserved several aspects of convent life as Nakako would have known it. The complete absence of any menial work in the life of the abbess—the cleaning, cooking, and gardening that we think of as fundamental to Zen asceticism—is striking. In Japan (just as in Catholic Europe), convents were organized on hierarchical lines, and the higher a nun's social status, the more she spent her time engaged in cultural and religious activities, leaving the menial work to others.<sup>32</sup> The Hōji'in ranked lower than its sister convents because it did not accept imperial daughters, but rather women from aristocratic families. Nevertheless, within each convent the same hierarchy of class privilege prevailed, and it is clear that Nakako and her fellow noble nuns did not spend their days mopping the wooden corridors with damp cloths, raking paths, and tending vegetables. A century after Nakako's time, in 1751, the reforming Zen monk Hakuin Ekaku paid several visits to the imperial convents Hōkyōji and Kōshōin and so disapproved of what he saw that he wrote a sternly worded letter to the two abbesses (both of them daughters of Emperor Nakamikado), criticizing their figured silk kimono and the excessive number of servants who waited on them at mealtimes and recommending that they engage in some sort of physical work, such as sweeping, for a set period of time every day.<sup>33</sup> One wonders what the sisters made of his suggestions.

To some extent, the distinction between religious and menial work is maintained even in today's more egalitarian convent world. When Shōrei entered the Hōji'in in 1981, Abbess Gakushō was the only fully fledged nun living there. Menial tasks were performed by an elderly "former geisha" who had arranged to retire to the convent. Although she wasn't properly a nun—she was nearly illiterate and hadn't received any formal instruction in Buddhism—she had shaved her head. In return for doing the cooking and cleaning, she was able to live out the remainder of her life in humble but dignified poverty, leaving the abbess free to pursue her religious vocation.

The nature of the religious activities in which nuns engaged was also determined by their social status. The higher a woman's status, the more restricted her movements. Again, the example of Daishōji is instructive: the greater part of the abbesses' days were spent within the convent walls,

where they devoted themselves to performing religious rituals, in particular prayers for the long life and health of the reigning emperor and for the peace and security of Japan.<sup>34</sup> Hōkyōji records show that in Nakako's day these services were performed regularly, on the first and the fifteenth of each month.<sup>35</sup>

Nuns at lower-ranking institutions did not enjoy such devotional serenity. For convents were not merely passive recipients of pious largesse; many were also, of necessity, hives of industry, where nuns were kept busy producing a variety of items for sale, such as fans, dried gourds, and braided yarn.<sup>36</sup> The Tokugawa shogunate was comparatively generous in its support of Buddhist establishments: for the upkeep of the Hōji'in and the nuns who lived there, land with an annual yield of 61 *koku* was assigned—about 9,000 bushels of rice, in the absence of other expenses, roughly enough to feed 60 people.<sup>37</sup> But this was an ideal figure, and we should not assume that the nuns regularly received this much, or that they could afford to devote themselves entirely to religion.

## CONVENT LIFE

Once Nakako had entered the Hōji'in and taken vows as a nun, what would her duties have been? And how do we know? The principal source for understanding the day-to-day lives of nuns are the convent diaries that they themselves compiled. Modeled on the *Daily Records* kept by women who worked in the Bureau of Palace Attendants at the imperial palace, convent diaries likewise are logbooks rather than personal journals, but centered on the abbess of each convent instead of the emperor. Over the years, numerous nuns took turns at recording the ceremonies and celebrations abbesses observed, the gifts they sent and received, and the endless round of visitors entertained and calls reciprocated. Occasionally, outside events that impinge upon the life of a convent are noted: earthquakes, fires, rebuilding. Entries are, if anything, even more laconic than those in the *Daily Records*, and the refrain "everything went smoothly and it was a joyous occasion" is entirely absent (at least from the entries I have examined).

The nuns at the Hōji'in presumably kept a diary, but no one knows whether it has survived, and if it has, where it is now. In 1873, the nearby Zen monastery Shōkokuji was given responsibility for overseeing the

affairs of several imperial and aristocratic convents, and whatever historical records the Hōji'in once preserved were taken away.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, the Shōkokuji archives have yet to be catalogued and made available to researchers.

What we do have are portions of the diaries kept at the Hōji'in's sister convents. The *Daishōji Daily Records* are extant from 1660 through the present day; supposedly, only seven years are missing.<sup>39</sup> There is a printed edition of entries for the first and twelfth months of 1660, but the entries are exceedingly brief and Nakako—or rather Shūhō, as she was then known—makes no appearance, nor is there any mention of the Hōji'in. Sections of the *Hōkyōji Daily Records* between 1648 and 1764 are extant, and we are fortunate to have a printed and annotated edition of an entire year, from the beginning of 1653.6 through the end of 1654.6, as well as 1660.1 and 1660.6, a total of fifteen months in all. As luck would have it, Shūhō appears frequently in the entries for 1653–54.<sup>40</sup> Once again, we are in touch with Nakako.

The Hōji'in is located on a quiet back street in what is now the Kamigyō Ward of Kyoto, within easy walking distance of its sister convents Daishōji and Hōkyōji. In the sixth month of 1653, both Shūhō—in her twelfth year of religious life—and the abbess of the Hōji'in were living at the Hōkyōji. Almost every day, an entry in the *Hōkyōji Daily Records* notes, "Shūhō went to the Hōji'in." On 6.15 we find out why: "Shūhō went to the Hōji'in. A hall of worship is being constructed, and to celebrate the roof raising, rice cooked with adzuki beans was received from the abbess of the Hōji'in."<sup>41</sup>

It seems safe to assume that Nakako and her superior were housed at their sister convent because construction work at their own temple had made it temporarily uninhabitable. By the end of the month, they were able to spend two nights at the Hōji'in—though they still kept in touch with the Hōkyōji by letter! It was not until the middle of the twelfth month that Shūhō and her abbess were able to move back for good. From that time on, entries such as "Shūhō came to visit from the Hōji'in and presently returned," indicate that the Hōji'in was habitable and the two were living there again.<sup>42</sup>

Aristocratic nuns led busy, full lives. They visited one another's convents constantly, and they also accompanied imperial abbesses on visits to temples where their brothers were prince-abbots. Sometimes these calls

appear to have been purely social; at other times, they were to attend lectures on Buddhist doctrines and texts. In the second month of 1654, for example, the abbess of the Hōkyōji listened to a series of lectures on the *Platform Sutra* and the *Last Teachings of the Buddha Sutra* at Kōshōji, a temple affiliated with the Pure Land sect. The *Hōkyōji Daily Records* carefully lists not only those who accompanied her but even the refreshments that were served.<sup>43</sup> Nuns were also free to receive visits, and people from all walks of life—from humble acupuncturists and doctors to high-ranking male relatives and their wives making courtesy calls in the line of duty—came to see them. Also among the male guests at convents were retired emperors visiting their daughters. When gifts or tribute were received—bolts of cloth, candles, and foodstuffs of all sorts, from black-eyed peas and fresh green soybeans to mushrooms, peeled chestnuts, persimmons, and several varieties of sticky rice—the bounty was immediately shared with nuns at sister convents. The nuns were also careful to maintain good relations with the shogunal authorities, sending regular gifts to Itakura Suō-no-Kami Shigemune, who had inherited the office of Kyoto Deputy from his father, Katsushige.<sup>44</sup>

Nuns bathed on average three times a month: the abbess made ritual ablutions known as *gyōzui*, perhaps in a mixture of hot and cold water, since the cold bath taken by everyone else is specifically noted.<sup>45</sup> Cleaning took place much less often; it is mentioned only every couple of months, with the annual airing of altar cloths and hanging scrolls in the sixth month and a special cleaning of the storehouse at year's end. Every sixty days, on the Day of the Monkey, the nuns stayed up all night composing poetry and playing games to keep each other awake.<sup>46</sup> For centuries people had observed these so-called “Kōshin vigils”: according to the popular belief, Chinese in origin, the body was inhabited by three worms, which would escape and report one's bad behavior to the heavenly deities if one fell asleep, and an early death could be the result!

Naturally, nuns also participated in and at times even officiated at religious ceremonies. Memorial services for Abbess Nyodai, founder of the Keiaiiji convent from which the Hōkyōji and the Hōji'in were both descended, were held on 1653.11.27 and 28, and Shūhō presented rice.<sup>47</sup> The Buddha's birthday was celebrated annually on the eighth of the fourth month; in 1654, the nuns at the Hōkyōji were learning to chant a hymn in praise of the Buddha that would be performed, and Master Tetsu of the

Kisseidō—perhaps a subtemple of the nearby Shōkokuji?—came several times to direct rehearsals.<sup>48</sup> There was something of a vogue for Kannon Repentance Ceremonies, described by Fister as follows:

The underlying aim of the ceremony was for participants to transcend human selfishness and purify their hearts through invoking the spirit of [the bodhisattva] Kannon and offering penitence for their misdeeds. During the ritual, which takes place in front of a Kannon icon, sutras are chanted in sequence by individual participating clerics, each of whom is assigned a particular role. At the end of the ceremony, as the participants circumambulate the hall, ritual scattering of flower petals takes place.<sup>49</sup>

It is likely that Shūhō took part in the Kannon Repentance Ceremonies commissioned and attended by retired Emperor GoMizuno'o in 1650 and 1651, and possibly even one held at the Daishōji in 1670, the year before she died.

The last mention of Shūhō in the printed text of *Hōkyōji Daily Records* appears in 1660. A memorial service for Emperor GoYōzei was held on 6.26, two months short of the forty-fourth anniversary of his death. She did not attend. The *Hōkyōji Records* notes only, "A letter was received from Shūhō."<sup>50</sup>

## MEN DIE AND WOMEN LIVE ON

In the Hōji'in death register, Shūhō (that is, Nakako) is listed as the fourteenth abbess. We do not know exactly when she was appointed, but we do know that she had been retired from the position for several years before her death. Two of her successors—the fifteenth Abbess Takuho Shūtoku, and the sixteenth Abbess Seizan Shūchō—predeceased her.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps alarmed by these two deaths in quick succession, Nakako seems to have called upon family connections to ensure that her convent remained in good hands. For the seventeenth abbess of the Hōji'in was none other than her great-grandniece, the daughter of Nakanoin Michishige by "a gentlewoman serving in the house." This young woman entered the convent in the seventh month of 1670, took vows later that month,

and adopted the religious name Baigan Shūsei (“plum cliff all-pervading purity”). For a time I wondered whether this expedient had been a way for Nakako to help her natal family by providing a respectable place for an illegitimate daughter of her grandnephew, while getting a successor into the bargain. But the one scholar I discussed this possibility with thought it unlikely; the notion that Shūsei’s birth to an anonymous woman serving in the Nakanoin house was an embarrassment is from a different, later age, she said.<sup>52</sup> Nakako’s great-grandniece and “disciple,” as she is described in the Nakanoin genealogy, safely took the Hōji’in into the eighteenth century, living until 1725.<sup>53</sup>

Nakako was about eighty years old when she died on 1671.6.27. Despite the tumultuous events of her early life, she was the longest-lived of her generation of Nakanoin. Her elder brother Michimura had died on 1653.2.29, aged sixty-five.<sup>54</sup> His death seems to have left many in the world of the imperial court feeling bereft. An imperial concubine who was the mother of Abbess Rishō of the Hōkyōji wrote to her daughter:

I send my congratulations on this felicitous day. How are you feeling? What with the senior nun of the Hōji’in not in attendance, I imagine you must be wanting for company and quite lonely. And no doubt you feel as we do about the passing of the former Palace Minister [Michimura] yesterday. We are worried about how you might be getting on and so I write to inquire. Will you be calling on us today? But then, given that the [third day of the third month] seasonal festival is almost upon us, perhaps you won’t? If you’re feeling lonely, why don’t you come anyhow? It would take your mind off things. Here, both His Majesty [GoMizuno’ō] and I think of nothing but the passing of the former Palace Minister. I expect it is the same with you. I write because we worry how you might be getting on.<sup>55</sup>

In subsequent correspondence, we learn that the shock of Michimura’s death gave mother and daughter such a turn that their regular acupuncturist was called out to treat them both.<sup>56</sup>

Michimura left this deathbed poem:

*samenikeri*  
*isoji no yume yo*  
*mishi wa nani*

Awakened from these  
dreams of fifty and more years  
and what did I see?

*Takao no momiji*  
*mi-Yoshino no yuki*<sup>57</sup>

Crimson leaves on Mount Takao,  
 petals snowing on Yoshino.

He compares his life to a dream from which the prospect of death awakens him. For “fifty and more years,” he has dreamed of cherry blossoms scattering like snow in spring and maple leaves turning crimson in autumn—two of the best-known tropes of Japanese poetry. Declaring that these phenomena have been the sole objects of his dreams (read: life), he suggests the fundamental importance of poetry to his existence.

Michimura’s son Michizumi died suddenly less than two months after his father, on 1653.4.8, aged only forty-one. Their deaths in close succession were possibly caused by smallpox, which seems to have broken out in the capital that year.<sup>58</sup> So it was that Nakako’s grandnephew Michishige, aged just twenty-two at the time of his father’s death, unexpectedly became head of the family. A courtesy call he made to his great-aunt is noted in the *Hōkyōji Daily Records*.<sup>59</sup> Portraits of these three generations of Nakanoin house heads—Michimura, Michizumi, and Michishige—survive, their wide foreheads and prominent brows suggesting a family trait.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to many of their menfolk, all of the Nakanoin women—whether wives or daughters—lived astonishingly long lives: Michikatsu’s widow, Nakako’s mother, outlived not only her husband but also all three of her sons; she died finally on 1659.3.7. Her date of birth and her age at death are not known, but even if we assume she was only eighteen when her second son, Michimura, was born in 1588, she would have been in her late eighties when she died. The contrast with her sister-in-law Gracia is striking. Both women were born into prominent provincial warrior families (Isshiki, Akechi) and married off in their teens, and each was safely delivered of four or five children. But the fortuitous marriage of one to a nobleman rather than a samurai meant that she survived; whatever the tribulations of Nakako’s mother’s life, she was never used as a hostage and never faced with the necessity of killing herself to demonstrate her loyalty and avoid capture or death at the hands of an enemy.

Michimura’s wife, who was also born to a provincial warrior family, outlived her husband by ten years and died a few years after her mother-in-law, on 1663.11.8, aged eighty-three. Michizumi’s wife outlived her husband by more than forty years and died, also aged eighty-three, on 1697.11.9. The longest-lived Nakanoin woman was Michimura’s daughter, who lived on

into the eighteenth century and died on 1706.10.16, aged eighty-nine. Her husband, Seikanji Tomotsuna, served as military liaison officer from 1652 through 1661, and both he and his wife, Nakako's niece, were frequent callers at the Hōkyōji.<sup>61</sup>

Nakako once had two graves. The surviving one is at the Rozanji, a temple in Kyoto just north of the old imperial palace, most famous today as the purported childhood home of Murasaki Shikibu, author of *The Tale of Genji*. Nakako's ashes, or some of them, were placed in an urn and buried in the section of the Rozanji graveyard once occupied by generations of the Nakanoin family. Her gravestone, shaped like an upturned egg, is now loose in its base of smaller stones that represent a lotus flower; the upturned egg shape indicates that the woman whose cremated remains lie below was in life a religious of the Zen sect.<sup>62</sup> Nakako's second grave would have been at the Jishōin, a subtemple of the Shōkokuji Zen monastery where, Abbess Shōrei told me, the ashes of nuns from the Hōji'in were traditionally laid to rest. In recent years, however, when the Shōkokuji "redeveloped" the graveyard of the Jishōin, all individual graves of Hōji'in nuns were removed and consolidated into one spot elsewhere in the grounds of the Shōkokuji, and can no longer be visited separately.

## THE HŌJI'IN TODAY

The temple buildings that Nakako would have known burned down in the Great Kyoto Fire at the end of the first month of 1788, the most destructive of several conflagrations that beset the capital after the turn of the eighteenth century. Flames consumed the imperial palace, the retired emperor's palace, the empress's palace, the mansions of the nobility in the courtiers' quarter surrounding the imperial palace, the keep of Nijō Castle, and the home of the shogunal deputy, as well as 200 temples and more than 35,000 houses.<sup>63</sup> It is little short of miraculous that the statues of Amitābha, Muge Nyodai, and Nyodai's teacher Wuxue Zuyuan were saved from the fire and still survive today. But by the end of the nineteenth century, whatever had been rebuilt after the Great Fire was in ruins:

At the time [October 1896], the Hōji'in had no hall of worship, not even a dwelling for the abbess, who lived in a small hut with her disciples. The



principal object of worship was buried beneath layers of dust in the earthen storehouse. Truly there was nothing to be seen; the temple was completely derelict.

An enterprising former kimono merchant, Sakura Fukunosuke, religious name Hōryū, determined to rebuild the temple and its fortunes. With the encouragement of the then abbess, he sold his business and, enlisting the aid of his wife and daughter, both of whom had also taken vows, set to work, cleaning, fund-raising, and proselytizing. In only five years, he had managed to acquire a new hall of worship; the statue of Amitābha is still housed there today. Originally, it was the residence of the Viscount Kuze and his family. After Emperor Meiji's removal to Tokyo with most of his court in 1868, the wooden building was dismantled and relocated as housing for one of the new national government's primary schools. In 1901, when the school was rebuilt, the building was taken apart again and reassembled at the Hōji'in.<sup>64</sup>

By the time Tanida Gakushō was appointed abbess in 1981, the building was in a perilous state and the roof leaked badly. No sooner had she succeeded in raising the funds to pay for a new roof than the statue of Amitābha and that of Nyodai were forcibly removed by bureaucrats from the Agency for Cultural Affairs to an ugly, purpose-built fireproof building on the grounds of the temple. There they may have been safe, but the abbess felt that the statues were deteriorating in the dark, dry atmosphere of the building, unappreciated and unworshipped, and in 1991 she and her vice-superior called upon the bureaucrats in the Kyoto branch of the agency to register their protest. Gently they threatened to continue their visits, to call upon the bureaucrats a hundred times in a practice known as a *hyakudo mairi*, until the statues were restored to air and light. The nuns quickly got their way. Since autumn 1991, the statues have again been freely available for worship in the temple's main hall and have "brightened and cheered up" beyond all recognition, the former abbess told me.

Although the Hōji'in has always been affiliated with the Rinzai Zen sect, the fact that the convent's principal object of worship is a statue of Amitābha Buddha means that it has attracted pilgrims and been a center for the chanting of the *Amida Sutra* at least since the early years of the eighteenth century.<sup>65</sup> The present abbess sees her principal religious duty as protecting the statue of Amitābha and making its powers available to believers in various ways. These include opening the temple daily to all

comers without charge; providing a vat of “Amida-tea” and dippers so that believers may help themselves and even take tea home to invalids unable to come to the temple themselves; and regular chanting of the *Amida Sutra*. At 7 a.m. (2 p.m. in winter) on the fifteenth of every month, a reading of the sutra is held in front of the statue of the Buddha; readings I have been to were attended by about half a dozen mostly elderly women, each of whom made a symbolic donation of ten yen.

The Hōji'in is not a wealthy establishment. It does not possess a graveyard from which the nuns could derive annual rental income; the convent is a “believers’ temple” (*shinja-dera*), reliant on gifts from the faithful and the income from a small parking garage that occupies part of its land. The Hōji'in's patron families live in widely separated parts of Kyoto. The nuns divide up the work of visiting the home of each patron family once a month, driving themselves in the convent's small car. They conduct memorial services (*kuyō*) for the ancestors commemorated in the family Buddhist altar, and they hear what has happened over the past month and act as confidants, counselors, and dispensers of Buddhist-tinged advice, homilies—some might say platitudes—that assist believers to accept their lives as they are and explain those lives to themselves and others. One day, as we were strolling in the park surrounding the former imperial palace where once the mansions of the nobility had stood, Shōrei suddenly asked me, “Do you have any children?” “No,” I answered. Did she perhaps detect a note of regret in my voice? For immediately she responded, “What good fortune! You must have finished raising your children in a previous life and been given the freedom to do other things in this one.” This explanation is an example of the answers to life's mysteries that she provides to those in need. Despite myself, I found her reasoning immediately appealing. In a single stroke, she had transformed misfortune into good fortune. I could imagine other women finding this explanation comforting too, perhaps even useful in shoring up their position within a family in which childlessness might have serious negative consequences.

The nuns are completely untroubled by the lowered status of the Hōji'in in their own time. In Kyoto, they say, the name of one's temple is an immediate indication of one's rank in the Buddhist hierarchy; but this status is not understood in the secular world outside Kyoto. Both nuns can trace their ancestry back to the aristocratic Fujiwara family and feel an affinity with each other because of this, and because they think of themselves as having returned, in a Buddhist sense, to Kyoto from the provinces where

they were born and grew up. The temple's status is unimportant to them personally and, they argue with some justification, meaningless in the wider world. Abbess Shōrei herself is also, by her own admission—indeed, insistence—completely uninterested in scholarship and learning. Books, sutras, words themselves, all pass away. Shōrei believes that her most important task is to attempt to “draw near to the spirit of the Buddha’s teachings.” We may perhaps imagine Nakako = Shūhō achieving a similar state of enlightenment during her years at the Hōji’in.





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The grave of Abbess Rankei Shūhō, the former Nakanoin Nakako, in the Rozanji, Kyoto. Flowers, candles, and incense were provided by her present-day successor at the Hōji'in Imperial Convent, Abbess Shibata Shōrei.

PHOTO BY AUTHOR

## EPILOGUE

Think only of the past as its remembrance gives you pleasure.

—JANE AUSTEN, *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

Aristocracy as a legally recognized class in Japanese society was abolished on May 3, 1947, when the postwar Constitution of Japan, which forbade the state from recognizing the peerage, came into effect. What happened to the Nakanoin family in the modern era and the choices they made well illustrate the way the entire class was eclipsed. On 1864.7.19, the Nakanoin family mansion in the courtiers' quarter of Kyoto burned to the ground. It was never rebuilt. The occasion of the fire was the "Incident at the Clam Palace Gate" (Hamaguri Go-mon no hen). This gate was so named because, like the clam (*hamaguri*), it only ever opened when subjected to fire. During one of the armed conflicts that precipitated the Meiji Revolution of 1867–68, between forces seeking to overthrow the shogunate and those loyal to the Tokugawa regime, samurai from the Chōshū domain battled samurai from the Aizu and Satsuma domains in the vicinity of the Clam Palace Gate. The Chōshū warriors went so far as to fire their cannon in the direction of the imperial palace, starting the fire that destroyed much of the courtiers' quarter. Chōshū was defeated by the opposing domains in this battle, though they were on the winning side when revolution was finally effected. The Nakanoin were not. They could not afford to rebuild their mansion and had

no option but to move to a smaller house, near the Goō Shrine in the northern Kamigyō Ward of Kyoto.

The last Nakanoin to be recorded in the list of heads of the family that begins in the twelfth century with Michikata and continues without a break for more than seven hundred years is Michinori, the twenty-fifth house head, born in 1856.<sup>1</sup> This list records not only patrilineal descent but also the dates of significant events in the lives of these men: their birth, coming of age, first appointment to court rank and subsequent promotions, retirement, and death. The final entry for Michinori is revealing. On February 5, 1879, he graduated from the Imperial Japanese Army Academy and was appointed second lieutenant. With this appointment to military rather than court office, the Nakanoin became part of the newly created Japan of the nineteenth century. The old aristocracy was not abolished, but it had been overshadowed. For those whose traditional specialties—their skills as costumers, kickballers, and poets—were no longer economically viable in the brave new world of Meiji, from now on the only way to survive would be to join up with the majority.

In 2001, I met Michinori's daughter Hiroko at the old people's home where she lived in Ōhara, in the mountains north of Kyoto. She was a petite elderly woman whose frail body belied her strong voice and firm grip on reality. Though she needed a walking stick to get about, she was in much better shape than the other residents of the home, most of whom were slumped in wheelchairs parked at tables or in front of television sets. By contrast, Hiroko was immaculately turned out in a grey-and-black patterned Chanel-style suit, pink and white silk scarf tied at her neck. Only her shoes—brown slip-on canvas shoes marked with her name—gave her away as a resident of an institution. And she was quite deaf; our conversation was aided by her regular taxi driver, who knew how best to make himself understood, grasping her by the shoulders and speaking directly into her left ear. She was a woman who had seen better days, but who still retained an appealing vanity about her. Despite the dispiriting surroundings in which she was—for the moment, as it seemed—confined, clearly she was of a different world.

On her bedside table in the ward she shared with three other women, she had put out a battered box containing a number of handwritten documents: a genealogy; a booklet listing family members, the dead and the married-out neatly crossed through with a diagonal line; and other papers to which she did not refer during our conversation. It was she who told me



of the destruction of the old Nakanoin mansion in the courtiers' quarter. She also told me that the family's connection with the Rozanji, the Kyoto temple where once all the Nakanoin graves, including Nakako's, were to be found, had been severed before the Second World War when the family could no longer afford the annual rent on the grave plot. Temple management is a business, having little to do with either religion or human feeling.

The present head of the Nakanoin family is Hiroko's nephew Izumi, born in 1947. He is a warm, friendly, and completely unassuming primary school teacher, his sole remaining aristocratic attribute his surname. (Michinori was the last Nakanoin househead to use the distinguishing character "Michi" in his personal name.) As a child, he recalled, he'd always known that he couldn't do anything naughty, because his surname was a memorable one that didn't afford him any anonymity. He hadn't been taught that he should take particular pride in his aristocratic roots. Perhaps his father, Nakanoin Takeo, had been able to compose classical Japanese poetry, he thought, but he himself could not.

The completeness with which the aristocracy has been willed—and has willed itself—out of existence in postwar Japan is astonishing, and admirable. The contrast with Britain, where aristocrats managed to turn themselves into "the self-proclaimed guardians of the 'national' heritage," is instructive.<sup>2</sup> In Japan, only two aristocratic families, the Konoe and the Reizei, managed anything like this, and significantly, they did it with their manuscript collections, not real estate.<sup>3</sup> There is of course nothing lamentable about the abolition of a parasitic aristocracy, and certainly their demise remains unmourned in Japan, least of all by former aristocrats themselves.<sup>4</sup> For all these reasons, and probably some others of his own, Nakanoin Izumi, born in the year that Japan's aristocracy was legally abolished, claims to know nothing about his family's history. He has grown up in a world in which most people are, for their own very good reasons, not much interested in the class he was (not quite) born to.

## OBSEQUIES FOR NAKAKO

Over the years I spent researching this book, it slowly became clear to me that I was never going to catch up with Nakako; that having followed the long trail she left to its end, I would find only a grave. On November 19,



2000, I visited that grave in the Rozanji with Shōrei, then vice-superior of the Hōji'in. Nakako's grave is completely untended, the inscription on her gravestone long since worn away. We were able to find it only because a good close-up photograph of the gravestone had been published in 1973 in a book about the women's palace in Japanese history.<sup>5</sup> While I was fetching water, Shōrei pulled up the weeds surrounding the gravestone. We set a small bunch of flowers in a bamboo vase, and lit a candle and a bundle of incense each. Shōrei showed me how to lay the incense down, lighted ends toward us, so that smoke would rise up and surround the gravestone to drive away any lingering unhappy spirits. We picked out a single stick each and stood them up next to the candles. Then we knelt down and she began to chant, by heart, the "Fundamental Mantra of the Amitābha Buddha," an incantation of the wondrous powers of the Buddha of Immeasurable Light, and "In Praise of Buddha Bones," in which the worshipper's praise of holy relics (the Buddha's, the deceased's) is combined with the wish that all living beings be enabled to practice the Way and attain perfect enlightenment.<sup>6</sup>

As we neared the end of our brief and informal obsequies for Nakako, Shōrei glanced up at the caption to the photograph to remind herself of Nakako's Buddhist name, so that the service should be dedicated correctly. She wanted to ensure that such karmic merit as our efforts may have earned be directed to our chosen recipient, her seventeenth-century predecessor, Abbess Rankei Shūhō. As we gathered up our belongings to leave, the bundle of incense burned to ash. The autumn afternoon was warm and the graveyard at Rozanji deserted but for us.

## PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

In accordance with Japanese custom, all characters are listed by surname followed by given name, with the exception of members of the imperial family, who do not have a surname. Emperors are listed here and referred to throughout this book by their posthumous names. Women did not change their surnames upon marriage in premodern Japan; the legal requirement for married couples to have the same surname dates from the promulgation of the Meiji Civil Code in 1898. I have therefore listed women by the surname of the family to which they were born, rather than the surname of the family into which they later married.

### Imperials

Emperor GoMizuno'o (1596–1680): son of GoYōzei by Konoe Sakiko,  
r. 1611–29.

Emperor GoYōzei (1571–1617): grandson of Ōgimachi, r. 1586–1611.

Emperor Meishō (1623–96): daughter of GoMizuno'o by Tokugawa Masako, r. 1629–43.

Emperor Ōgimachi (1517–93): father of Sanehito, grandfather of GoYōzei,  
r. 1557–86.

Prince Sanehito (1552–86): son of Ōgimachi, father of GoYōzei.

Prince Toshihito (1579–1629): younger brother of GoYōzei, poetic disciple of Hosokawa Yūsai.

## Imperial Consorts and Concubines

Hei no Naishi (?–1661): Nishinotōin Tokiko, daughter of Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi. Religious name Mumu Jishō. “Hei” indicates that the family belong to the Taira clan.

Kan no Naishi: daughter of Karahashi Arimichi (1565–1644). “Kan” indicates that the family belong to the Sugawara clan.

Kanshūji Hareko (1553–1620): mother of Emperor GoYōzei. As Empress Mother, granted the title Shinjōtōmon’in in 1600.

Konoe Sakiko (1575–1630): daughter of Konoe Sakihisa, Consort of GoYōzei, mother of Emperor GoMizuno’ō. As Empress Mother, granted the title Chūkamon’in in 1620.

Naka no Naishi: daughter of Minase Ujinari (1571–1644). “Naka” indicates that the family is descended from Fujiwara no Michitaka, who was known as “Naka no Kanpaku,” the “middle” chancellor.

Nakanoin Nakako (1591?–1671): daughter of Michikatsu, concubine of Emperor GoYōzei. Service name Gon no Suke; religious name Rankei Shūhō.

Sanuki: sister of Kaneyasu Bingo; the only lesser lady of rank (*myōbu*) involved in the dragon-scale scandal.

Shin’ōsuke (1593?–?): daughter of Hirohashi Kanekatsu.

## Nobles

Asukai Masakata (1584–1626): participant in the dragon-scale scandal, banished to Ōki.

Hirohashi Kanekatsu (1558–1622): military liaison officer 1603–22.

Inokuma Noritoshi (1583–1609): instigator of the dragon-scale scandal.

Kaneyasu Bingo (?–1609): court dentist and participant in the dragon-scale scandal.

Kanshūji Mitsutoyo (1575–1612): nephew of Hareko, military liaison officer 1603–12.

Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (1579–1638): courtier, poet, and intimate of Hosokawa Yūsai; participant in the dragon-scale scandal but pardoned by Ieyasu.

- Kasannoin Tadanaga (1588–1662): participant in the dragon-scale scandal, banished to Ezo.
- Konoe Nobutada (1565–1614): son of Konoe Sakihisa, uncle of Emperor GoMizuno'o. Chancellor 1605–6.
- Konoe Sakihisa (1536–1612): father of Nobutada and Sakiko. Chancellor 1554–68.
- Nakamikado (Matsunoki) Munenobu (1577?–1628): participant in the dragon-scale scandal, banished to Iōgashima.
- Nakanoin Michikatsu (1556–1610): courtier, poet, and scholar of *The Tale of Genji*, father of Michimura and Nakako. Religious name Sonen; style Yasokuken.
- Nakanoin Michimura (1588–1653): courtier and poet, son of Michikatsu, elder brother of Nakako. Military liaison officer 1623–30.
- Nanba Munekatsu (1586–1651): younger brother of Asukai Masakata, participant in the dragon-scale scandal, banished to Izu but pardoned in 1612.
- Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi (1552–1639): courtier and father of imperial concubine Hei no Naishi.
- Ōinomikado Yorikuni (1577–1613): participant in the dragon-scale scandal, banished to Iōgashima.
- Sanjōnishi Kin'eda (1487–1563): courtier and scholar, maternal grandfather of Michikatsu.
- Sanjōnishi Sane'eda (1575–1640): courtier and scholar, grandson of Kin'eda, protégé of Michikatsu and Hosokawa Yūsai. Military liaison officer 1613–40.
- Sanjōnishi Saneki (1511–79): courtier and scholar, son of Kin'eda, uncle of Michikatsu.
- Tokudaiji Sanehisa (1583–1616): participant in the dragon-scale scandal but pardoned by Ieyasu.

## Warriors

- Akechi Mitsuhide (1528?–82): vassal of Oda Nobunaga.
- Akechi Tama (1563–1600): daughter of Mitsuhide, wife of Hosokawa Tadaoki; baptized Gracia.
- Azai Eyo or Gō (1573–1626): niece of Oda Nobunaga, wife of Tokugawa Hidetada, and mother of seven of his children, including Sen, Iemitsu, and Masako.

Gracia: *see* Akechi Tama

Hosokawa Fujitaka = Yūsai (1534–1610): vassal of the Ashikaga shoguns, then Oda Nobunaga.

Hosokawa Tadaoki = Sansai (1563–1645): son of Fujitaka; vassal of Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu; husband of Akechi Tama = Gracia.

Ishida Mitsunari (1560–1600): vassal of Toyotomi Hideyoshi; defeated at the Battle of Sekigahara and executed in Kyoto.

Itakura Iga-no-Kami Katsushige (1545–1624): Kyoto Shogunal Deputy, 1603–20.

Oda Nobunaga (1534–82): first of the three great conquerors of Japan.

Ōta Gyūichi (1527–1613): vassal of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi; chronicler of their lives as well as the dragon-scale scandal.

Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632): son of Ieyasu. Shogun 1605–23.

Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–51): son of Hidetada. Shogun 1623–51.

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616): last of the three great conquerors of Japan and founder of the Tokugawa shogunate. Shogun 1603–5.

Tokugawa Masako (1607–78): youngest daughter of Hidetada; empress of GoMizuno'ō; mother of Meishō. As Empress Mother, granted the title Tōfukumon'in in 1629.

Tokugawa Sen (1597–1666): eldest daughter of Hidetada, wife of Toyotomi Hideyori.

Toyotomi Hideyori (1593–1615): son of Hideyoshi.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98): second of the three great conquerors of Japan.

## Others

Luís Frois S.J. (1532–97): Portuguese missionary who arrived in Nagasaki in 1563 and, except for a brief period in Macao, spent the rest of his life in Japan.

Kutta-Suzuki family: first family of the village of Kutta, now called Nijō, in southern Izu; hereditary intendants of the local Mishima Shrine.

O-Yasu (?–1623): Nakako's maid and fellow exile.

Satomura Jōha (1525–1602): linked-verse master.

## GLOSSARY

This short glossary lists the English translations I have used for the official titles held by the characters who appear in this book, the names of the departments of the imperial or shogunal bureaucracy to which they were appointed, and a few other terms.

|                                  |                                                                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| abbess                           | <i>chōrō</i> ( <i>Hōkyōji nikki</i> );<br><i>jūji</i> (modern Japanese) |
| acting                           | Gon                                                                     |
| Assistant Chief Palace Attendant | Naishi no Suke                                                          |
| Bureau of Palace Attendants      | Naishi no Tsukasa                                                       |
| Bureau of Palace Supplies        | Tonomori no Tsukasa                                                     |
| Chamberlain                      | Jijū                                                                    |
| Chancellor                       | Kanpaku                                                                 |
| Chief Palace Attendant           | Naishi no Kami                                                          |
| Chinese-style poem               | <i>shi</i>                                                              |
| Cloistered Prince                | Nyūdō Shinnō                                                            |
| cognomen                         | <i>yagō</i>                                                             |
| Colonel                          | Chūjō                                                                   |
| coming-of-age                    | <i>binsogi</i> (women), <i>genpuku</i> (men)                            |

|                                  |                                                      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| concubine/s                      | <i>kisaki (-tachi)</i> (in <i>Kazan monogatari</i> ) |
| Consort                          | Nyōgo                                                |
| Council of State                 | Daijōkan                                             |
| Department of Palace Supplies    | Tonomori Ryō                                         |
| Department of Religion           | Jingikan                                             |
| District Commissioner            | Kōri Bugyō                                           |
| Emperor                          | Tennō                                                |
| Empress                          | Chūgū                                                |
| Empress Mother                   | Nyoin                                                |
| enceinte                         | <i>maru</i>                                          |
| Governor                         | Kami                                                 |
| Grand Counselor                  | Dainagon                                             |
| Grand Minister of State          | Daijōdaijin                                          |
| Head of the Imperial Secretariat | Kurōdo no Tō                                         |
| Imperial Advisor                 | Sangi                                                |
| Imperial Archives                | Shoryōbu                                             |
| imperial censure                 | <i>chokkan</i>                                       |
| Imperial Emissary                | Senji                                                |
| Imperial Envoy                   | Chokushi                                             |
| Imperial Study                   | Go-Gakumonjo                                         |
| Japanese poem/poetry             | <i>waka</i>                                          |
| Lady                             | <i>~tsubone</i>                                      |
| Lady of the Wardrobe             | Kōi                                                  |
| lesser lady of rank              | <i>myōbu</i>                                         |
| Lord                             | <i>~kyō</i>                                          |
| Magistrate                       | Machi Bugyō                                          |
| Major                            | Shōshō                                               |
| Middle Counselor                 | Chūnagon                                             |
| Military Liaison Officer         | Buke tensō                                           |
| Minister of the Left             | Sadaijin                                             |
| Minister of the Right            | Udaijin                                              |
| ministerial family               | <i>daijinke</i>                                      |
| Ministry of Palace Affairs       | Nakatsukasa Shō                                      |
| My Lady, My Lord                 | <i>~dono</i>                                         |
| Palace Attendant                 | Naishi                                               |
| Palace Guards                    | Konoefu                                              |
| Palace Minister                  | Naidaijin                                            |
| Prelate                          | Sōzu                                                 |

|                                          |                                      |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Prince                                   | Shinnō                               |
| Prince-Abbot                             | Hōshinnō                             |
| Prince-Minister of Ceremonial            | Shikibukyō no Miya                   |
| Princess                                 | Naishinnō                            |
| Regent                                   | Sesshō                               |
| regental family                          | <i>sekke</i>                         |
| Secretary Palace Attendant               | Naishi no Jō                         |
| Senior Secretary of<br>Palace Attendants | Kōtō no Naishi, Nagahashi no Tsubone |
| serving women                            | <i>nyōju</i>                         |
| Shogunal Deputy                          | Shoshidai                            |
| warlord                                  | Sengoku daimyo                       |
| women's palace                           | <i>kōkyū</i>                         |





## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear in the notes and the bibliography:

|       |                                                                                                   |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DNS   | <i>Dai Nihon shiryō</i> . Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1901– .                                       |
| KST   | <i>Shintei zōho kokushi taikei</i> . 66 vols. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929–67.                        |
| KT    | <i>Shinpen kokka taikan</i> . 20 vols. Kadokawa Shoten, 1983–92.                                  |
| NKBT  | <i>Nihon koten bungaku taikei</i> . 102 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1957–68.                            |
| NKBZ  | <i>Nihon koten bungaku zenshū</i> . 51 vols. Shōgakukan, 1970–76.                                 |
| SNKBT | <i>Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei</i> . 105 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1989–2005.                     |
| SNKBZ | <i>Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū</i> . 88 vols. Shōgakukan, 1994–2002.                       |
| ZGR   | <i>Zoku gunsho ruijū</i> . 37 vols. + 3 supplementary vols. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1959–60. |
| ZZGR  | <i>Zokuzoku gunsho ruijū</i> . 17 vols. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1969–78.                     |

Unless otherwise noted, the place of publication of Japanese works is Tokyo.



## NOTES

### PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. A sample list of popular accounts of women's lives during the period 1573–1615 would include: the historical novels mentioned in note 3 below; Kumai Kei's 1978 movie *O-Gin-sama*, about the daughter of tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522–91); and many of NHK's relentlessly sentimental Sunday evening historical sagas, such as *Kasuga no tsubone* (1989), about the wet nurse to the third Tokugawa shogun; *Toshiie to Matsu* (2002), which depicted the warrior Maeda Toshiie (1538–99) and his faithful helpmate Matsu (1547–1617); and *Gō: Himetachi no sengoku* (2011), about the life and times of Azai Gō, also known as Eyo, the niece of Oda Nobunaga who became the wife of the second Tokugawa shogun and mother of the third.
2. An observation made by the historian Kasaya Kazuhiko in conversation, Kyoto, December 7, 2000.
3. On Akechi Tama, better known by the anachronistic designation “Hosokawa Gracia,” see the biography by Tabata Yasuko, *Hosokawa Garasha*; and the novel by Miura Ayako, *Hosokawa Garasha fujin*. “Hosokawa Gracia” is anachronistic because at this time in Japan women did not adopt their husbands' surnames upon marriage; see the several examples in the “Momoyama jidai” chapter of Tsunoda, *Nihon no joseimei*, 2:121–70. On Tokugawa Masako, see Kubo, *Tokugawa Masako*; and Miyao, *Tōfukumon'in Masako no namida*. On Bertrande de Rols, see Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; and the novel by Janet Lewis, *The*

*Wife of Martin Guerre*. My thanks to Susan Tyler for recommending Lewis. The scholarship on Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653) is extensive and there are several novels that relate the story of her life; see, for example, Alexandra Lapierre’s *Artemisia*. For a scholarly reappraisal, see the essays in Bal, *The Artemisia Files*.

4. Woolf, “The New Biography,” 229.
5. Davis, *Women on the Margins*, 141. Maria Sibylla Merian was born in Frankfurt am Main in 1647 and died in Amsterdam in 1717. Greer, *Shakespeare’s Wife*; Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*.

## INTRODUCTION

1. “Ganzen nite, arakenaki goseibai o,” in “Ôta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 464.
2. Translation after Watson, *Basic Writings*, 79.
3. In Japanese, I am especially indebted to the accounts in Fujii Jōji, “Edo bakufu no seiritsu to tennō”; Hinotani Teruhiko, *Edo jidai no jikenchō*; Imatani Akira, *Buke to tennō*; and Kimura Yōko, “Kanjo ruzai jiken (Inokuma jiken) no ichisokumen.” To the best of my knowledge, Kimura is the only historian to have focused on the women involved. In English, the fullest account of the dragon-scale scandal and its larger meaning is provided by Lee Butler in chapter 5 of his engrossing study of the imperial institution and the court in lean times, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan*.
4. “Ôta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 462.
5. In Keichō 3 (1598).12, the emperor changed his name from Kazuhito to Katahito, “universal benevolence.” *Kokushi daijiten*, s.v. “GoYōzei Tennō.”
6. My summary-description of Japan in the sixteenth century is indebted to Beasley, “Edo Japan,” 17.
7. This story appears in several sources; my version is a composite. The earliest is Ôta, *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 470–71, which places both Prince Sanehito and his son, the future GoYōzei, at the scene. Jōha’s actions appear in the version recorded by Itō Tōgai (1670–1736), who heard it from his grandmother, a granddaughter of Jōha, in his miscellany “Kōshinroku” (1716–36), *Zuihitsu hyakkaen*, 6:45. Tōgai’s account is cited as the source for the version given in Mikuma Katen and Ban Kōkei, *Zoku kinsei kijinden* (1798), 2:60. “On the backs of their servants” is from the account in Emura Sensai, “Rōjin zatsuwa,” 33. Sensai (1565–1664) was an extraordinarily long-lived Kyoto physician; the reminiscences in “Rōjin zatsuwa” were recorded by his disciple Itō Tan’an sometime between 1653 and 1664 and first published in 1713.
8. My description of Kyoto in the 1590s is indebted to Boot, “The Adoption and Adaptation of Neo-Confucianism,” 96–97.
9. The story forms part of the miscellany “Kaiki,” anecdotes told by courtier Konoe Iehiro (1667–1736) and edited by his doctor, Yamashina Dōan (1677–1746). Text in NKBT 96:441.

10. The poem is *Hyakunin issyu* no. 5, but was first collected as *Kokinwakashū* no. 215.
11. The possibility that Prince Sanehito died of smallpox is noted in *Kuronikku Sengoku zenshi*, 499, caption to picture of GoYōzei.
12. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 23.
13. Fukutō et al., ed., *Rekishī no naka no kōjotachi*, 155–56, 188–89, 195–203.
14. Hinotani, *Edo jidai no jikenchō*, 113, argues that the name was chosen by GoYōzei himself, as an expression of his abiding respect for the policies of the earlier Emperor Yōzei. Kubo, *GoMizuno'o tennō*, 33, states that the choice was made by Chancellor Nijō Akizane (1556–1619).
15. Kadokawa *Nihonshi jiten*, s.v. “Yōzei Tennō.”
16. The murder is noted in the entry for Genkei 7 (884).11.10 in *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, completed 901, the last of the “Six National Histories” (Rikkokushi), cited in NKBT 86:375, note 37. Later histories are slightly more circumspect: in *Gukanshō* (1219), Yōzei is described as having done “unspeakably bad things” (NKBT 86:85; Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, 40); in *Jinnō shōtōki* (1343), he is said to have “possessed a violent disposition and was not fit to be a ruler” (NKBT 87:122; Varley, *Gods and Sovereigns*, 171). I am grateful to Ghazal Asif for her suggestion of “milk-brother” as a translation for *menotogo*. In English, see the detailed account in Hesselink, “The Emperor Who Committed Murder.”
17. “Pusillanimous” (*hikyō*), “imperatoritis” (*tennōbyō*), in Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 55–56, 130.
18. Eishun, in *Tamon'in nikki*, entries for Tenshō 8 (1580).8.4 and 11.12, translated in Fujiki and Elison, “The Political Posture of Oda Nobunaga,” 191.
19. On Hideyoshi's assumption of the office of chancellor, see Elison, “Hideyoshi,” 229–32; Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 47–52; Taniguchi, *Ryūrō no sengoku kizoku*, 200–2; and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 165–68.
20. Wakita, *Nihon chūsei joseishi*, 240; Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 167, 183; Taniguchi, *Ryūrō no sengoku kizoku*, 207–9. According to the entry on *chūgū* in *Kokushi daijiten*, 7:479, the last empress for whom there is some evidence was appointed during the reign of Emperor Chōkei (1343–94; r. 1368?–83?). Thereafter, the position lapsed until 1624, when it was revived by Emperor GoMizuno'o, with the support of the Tokugawa family, for his consort Tokugawa Masako. Reasons for the disappearance of empresses and consorts, and the deleterious effects of their absence on aristocratic women's education and literary production, are explored in Tonomura, “Nyōbō bungaku no yukue.”
21. On Furuichi Taneko (1583–1658), known when in GoYōzei's service as Sanmi no Tsubone, see Niimi, “Kaoku Gyokuei to Chaa”; Kubo, *GoMizuno'o tennō*, 168–69; and Fister, “Sanmi no Tsubone.” Temple sources quoted in Fister's essay suggest that Sanmi no Tsubone may have been Sakiko's niece; my description of her as Sakiko's cousin follows sources quoted in Niimi and Kubo.
22. Elison, “Hideyoshi,” 236, citing the contemporary account by Ōmura Yūko, his *Juraku gyōkō ki* of 1588.5. On GoYōzei's visit to the Jurakutei, see the accounts

- in Elison, "Hideyoshi," 234–39; Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 183–87; Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 84–85; and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 159–61.
23. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 140.
  24. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 128–36.

## 1. A COURTIER'S LIFE, IN AND OUT OF THE WORLD

1. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 15.
2. My account of the Nakanoin family economy and Michikatsu's life is indebted to Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," in which the principal sources, some still in manuscript, are identified, transcribed, and discussed. Supplementary material on Michikatsu's life after 1593 may be found in Inoue, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū: Muromachi kōki*, 619–21, 626–28, 699–701.
3. Alister McGrath's characterization of Renaissance writers' attitude to the wisdom of the past, in McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 176.
4. Sanetaka served Emperor GoTsuchimikado (1442–1500; r. 1464–1500), GoTsuchimikado's son Emperor GoKashiwabara (1464–1526; r. 1500–26), and GoKashiwabara's son Emperor GoNara (1496–1557; r. 1526–57).
5. Wakita, *Nihon chūsei joseishi*, 200; Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 132.
6. The fullest account of Sanetaka's life and work is Miyakawa, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka*. In English, see Horton's essays, "Sanjōnishi Sanetaka" and "Portrait of a Medieval Japanese Marriage." On the sale of *Genji* manuscripts, see Miyakawa, *Sanjōnishi Sanetaka*, 415–16.
7. Matsuyashamaru's poem is translated from the citation in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 3. For a complete transcription and discussion of the "Genji monogatari kyōen waka" sequence, see Ii, *Genji monogatari chūshakushi no kenkyū*, 1067–90.
8. Translation from Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 473.
9. "Nakanoin boy" (*Nakanoin chigo*), *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Eiroku 5 (1562).1.18, 6:211; "serve saké to the Emperor," *Tokitsugu-kyō ki* entry for Eiroku 6 (1563).1.15, cited in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 3.
10. Christian Ratcliff to the Premodern Japanese Studies (pmjs) mailing list, August 21, 2009, [https://groups.google.com/forum/#topic/pmjs/aaZepmCE\\_hk](https://groups.google.com/forum/#topic/pmjs/aaZepmCE_hk).
11. Ōta, *Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 229–30.
12. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 47–50.
13. A mere four months of Michikatsu's diary, *Keikaiki*, are available in a printed edition: Eiroku 13 (1570).4, Genki 1 (1570).5, Tenshō 7 (1579).1 and 2, all in ZZGR 5:409–21. Genzaburō's week-long visit took place between Eiroku 13 (1570).4.14 and 4.21; for the relevant entries in Michikatsu's diary, see ZZGR 5:410. The suggestion that Genzaburō was a family steward is made by Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 5.
14. On Michikatsu's relationship with Saneki, see Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 4–5, and Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki*

- kenkyū*, 245; for his relationship with Sanehito, see Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 7–8. Michikatsu’s carrying of Prince Sanehito’s sword in the inaugural procession to the Nijō Palace is noted in Ōta, *Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 338.
15. Fróis’s letter to the Provincial of India, Padre Antonio de Quandros S.J., dated Miaco, 4 October 1571, cited and translated in Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus*, 75–76.
  16. *Tokitsugu-kyō ki*, the diary of Yamashina Tokitsugu (1507–79), entry for Genki 2 (1571).9.12, DNS 10.6:855.
  17. *Keikaiki* entry for Tenshō 7 (1579).2.25, ZZGR 5:420.
  18. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Tenshō 8 (1580).6.22, 7:319.
  19. Michikatsu mentions events taking place in the palace attendants’ duty room (*oyudono no ue ni oite*) in *Keikaiki* entries for Tenshō 7 (1579).1.8 and 1.9, ZZGR 5:414–15.
  20. Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 8.
  21. Odaka Toshio, in his supplementary note 244 to Matsunaga, *Taionki*, NKBT 95:118.
  22. On imperial censure (*chokkan*), see the entries in *Nihonshi kōjiten*, *Heian jidaishi jiten*, and the examples discussed in Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 105, 116–22.
  23. “Fled the capital” (*chikuden*), *Kugyō bunin* entry for Tenshō 8 (1580), cited in Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 8.
  24. “Nakanoin Sonen eiga utsushi,” cited in Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 9.
  25. My account of Yūsai’s early life is indebted to Ikeda, “Hosokawa Yūsai.” For simplicity’s sake I refer to Yūsai throughout by the religious name he took in the sixth month of 1582, immediately after Nobunaga’s death.
  26. Tabata, *Hosokawa Garasha*, 8, 72, 74. “Azuchi jō” on 74 is an error for “Sakamoto jō”; cf. 8.
  27. Tabata, *Hosokawa Garasha*, 112, 119.
  28. On this subject, see Berry, “Public Peace and Private Attachment,” 259–63. My thanks to Angus Lockyer for recommending this essay.
  29. The story of Hideyoshi using his mother as a hostage is from Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 79–80.
  30. *Shokaden*, *Tōke keifu*, and *Kafu* (DNS 12.7:106), all cited in Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 11. Another Nakanoin genealogy, *Tōke ryaku keizu*, describes Michikatsu’s wife as “the daughter of Hosokawa Hyōbu-no-Tayū Fujitaka, the lay monk Yūsai, but in reality the daughter of Isshiki Sakyō-no-Daibu Yoshitsugu, that is to say, Yūsai’s granddaughter.” Given subsequent events narrated here, “granddaughter” is clearly an error. The pronunciation “Tayū” is from *Kadokawa kogo daijiten*, s.v. “Taifu”; for the pronunciation “Daibu,” see the explanation given in meaning no. 4 of this same entry.
  31. Ōta, *Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 238.
  32. “In battle,” *Dai jinmei jiten*; “by his own hand,” Abe and Nishimura, eds., *Sengoku jinmei jiten*, both s.v. “Isshiki Yoshimichi.”



33. Abe and Nishimura, eds., *Sengoku jinmei jiten*, s.v. "Isshiki Mitsunobu" and "Isshiki Yoshisada."
34. Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 123.
35. Abe and Nishimura, eds., *Sengoku jinmei jiten*, s.v. Isshiki Mitsunobu.
36. Yonehara, *Hosokawa Yūsai, Tadaoki no subete*, 236.
37. Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 366.
38. This is the view of Tabata Yasuko, who dates Yoshiari's death to 1582.9.8. See her *Hosokawa Garasha*, 110, 228.
39. Emura Sensai, "Rōjin zatsuwa," 25–26. My translation follows the variant text (*ihon*) that makes Yūsai's son and heir Hosokawa Tadaoki (= Sansai), rather than Yūsai, the slayer of Isshiki. I am grateful to my colleague Glenn Stockwell, 7th dan Musō Jikiden Eishinryū laidō, for demonstrating this form (*waza*) and explaining some of the finer points of sword etiquette to me.
40. "Nakanoin Yasokuken nanajūroku shu," cited in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 10.
41. "Ruiju hyakushu," cited in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 10.
42. "Chakutō hyakushu waka," cited in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 10. Also in Nakanoin, *Michikatsu shū*, no. 188, KT 8:175.
43. The poems are collected in Yūsai's *Shūmyōshū*, nos. 628–630, KT 9:18.
44. For a short biography of Huang Tingjian (1045–1105), see Palumbo-Liu, *The Poetics of Appropriation*, 195–96. For an understanding of the poem from which Michikatsu derived his style, I am indebted to the annotated text in *Kō Sankoku*, 196–98. Huang Tingjian's poem has its origins in an earlier poem by Sima Guang (1019–86): "When planting bamboo, you don't need a lot; if you do plant a lot, it annoys the ear and eye/And for one who has met with misfortune, two or three stalks should suffice."
45. Information on Takamochi from *Tōke ryaku keizu*. According to sources cited on the Higo Hosokawa-han shūi Web site, <http://www.shinshindoh.com/samurai/10-sa.htm> (accessed February 26, 2012), Takamochi died on Keichō 9 (1604).3.28, which means he was born about 1584.
46. *Tōke den* records that Michimura became a courtier on 1600.1.10 when he was awarded junior fifth rank (*jūgoi*) and appointed chamberlain (*jijū*).
47. This genealogy, the *Tōke ryaku keizu*, actually provides Michikatsu with two daughters: Nakako and another daughter, who is listed by her religious name, Shūhō. See <http://edb.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/exhibit/n122/image/1/n122s0012.html> (accessed January 24, 2009). A variety of other sources, however, suggest that the genealogy is again in error here and that the two daughters are in fact one daughter, Nakako, who later took the religious name Rankei Shūhō. I follow this interpretation of the evidence. See, for example, the Nakanoin genealogies in *Keizu sanyō*, 9:142; and Kondō, *Kyūtei kuge keizu shūran*, 502; as well as the discussion in Tsunoda, *Nihon no kōkyū*, 350–51. The only exception to this scholarly consensus would seem to be Kusaka, "Nakanoin Michimura nenpu kō: Shōseinen-ki," who accepts the *Tōke ryaku keizu* uncritically. Inoue too nods when in *Chūsei*

*kadanshi no kenkyū*: *Muromachi kōki*, 620, he describes “Hōshū” as another of Michikatsu’s sons.

48. Ch. Yili, Jp. *Girai*, cited in Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 104.
49. Untitled Konoe family genealogy, Yōmei Bunko MS 3689. See also *Keizu sanyō*, 2:106.
50. *Kakochō*, Hōji’in MS; *Kakochō*, Rozanji MS. I am grateful to Abbot Machida Taisen of the Rozanji for faxing me the relevant page of the temple’s death register.
51. Chikaaki’s date of birth is recorded in *Shokaden* and *Kugyō bunin*, cited in Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 22.
52. Information from the entry on *momen* in *Kokushi daijiten*, 13:850–51; and Hanley, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan*, 94–97.
53. “Yasoku yagura” See the plan of Tanabe Castle entitled “Rōjō zu ni miru Tanabejō oyobi jōkamachi zu,” based on an original in the Eisei Bunko (the Hosokawa house archives) and reproduced in *Maizuru-shi shi, tsūshihen*, jō, 599.
54. Fróis, *Tratado*, 128, translated in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 208, slightly adapted.
55. On 1703.3.13, when Tsuruhime (1677–1704), daughter of the fifth Tokugawa Shōgun Tsunayoshi (1646–1709; r. 1680–1709), visited the Rikugien estate of Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658–1714), she was treated to the sight of several life-size dolls dressed variously as tea sellers beckoning customers into a model roadside tea shop, a shrine maiden, and a shrine priest. For a detailed account of the occasion, see “Yamamizu,” the fifteenth chapter of *Matsukage nikki* by Yoshiyasu’s concubine Ōgimachi Machiko (1679–1724), in Miyakawa, *Yanagisawa-ke no kōtengaku*, esp. 569–72.
56. A paraphrase of Yūsai’s afterword to Michikatsu’s commentary, from Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 13. For the original context, see the printed edition of Nakanoin, *Mingō nisso*, 4:777.
57. See reproductions of the Keichō period (1596–1615) old movable type edition (*kōkatsujibon*) of *Genji monogatari* in the National Diet Library, WA7–263, [http://www.ndl.go.jp/exhibit60/copy1/ise\\_2.html#no6](http://www.ndl.go.jp/exhibit60/copy1/ise_2.html#no6) (accessed January 23, 2011).
58. “*Genji mizaru uta yomi wa ikon no koto nari*,” in *Kenkyū yonen roppyakuban uta-awase*, NKBT 74:442.
59. Harper and Shirane, eds., *Reading The Tale of Genji*, forthcoming.
60. *Delighting in Flowers (Rōkashō)* was completed in 1510 and *Brooklet of Commentary (Sairyūshō)* was compiled between 1510 and 1513.
61. The most detailed account of the genesis of *Starlight Commentary (Myōjōshō)* from Hatakeyama Yoshifusa’s 1533 commission through its completion ca. 1552 is “*Sairyūshō kara Myōjōshō e*,” in Ii, *Genji monogatari chūshakushi no kenkyū*, 640–701. “Accretive” is from Horton, “Sanjōnishi Sanetaka,” 255.
62. Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 14–16, notes that Michikatsu was in the capital in 1592.1 and for several months during 1596.
63. Chōshōshi’s story is recorded by linked verse master Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–

- 1653) in *Taionki*, NKBT 95:59. Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 15, argues that the poetry party referred to in this passage took place in 1594.
64. "Yasoku kotobagaki waka," cited in Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 15.
65. Nakanoin, *Mingō nisso*, 1:5–6. Michikatsu's holograph survives in the Kyoto University Library: Nakanoin/V/33. *Endnotes* (*Okui*, ca. 1233) is an early *Genji* commentary by Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241). For an understanding of Huang Tingjian's poem, "Rhyming in response to Xing Dunfu," I am indebted to the annotated text in *Kō Sankoku*, 121–24.
66. McMullen, *Idealism, Protest, and The Tale of Genji*, 292.
67. *Genji monogatari Kogetsushō*. As Mochizuki Kimihiko (style San'ei; 1697–1769), personal physician to the eighth Tokugawa Shogun Yoshimune (1684–1751; r. 1716–45) noted in his miscellany *Rokumon zuihitsu*, 57, "I've heard it said that most of Kigin's *Kogetsushō* is taken from this work [*Mingō nisso*]."
68. Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 17, citing "Hosokawa-ke ki."
69. Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 18. For a detailed account of GoYōzei as "cultural arbiter," see Lillehoj, *Art and Palace Politics*, 65–85.
70. Translation from Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 252, slightly adapted.
71. Hosokawa, *Shūmyōshū*, nos. 605–6, KT 9:17.
72. My thanks to Mr. Nono'o Riichi, formerly Director of the Tanabe Castle Museum, for sharing this story with me during a visit to Maizuru on November 8, 2000.

## 2. THE YEAR 1600: A WORLD AGAIN AT WAR

1. Cited in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 262, and Tabata, *Hosokawa Garasha*, 205; my translation.
2. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 4 (1599).12.7, 9:123.
3. Nakanoin, *Michikatsu shū*, nos. 1338–39, KT 8:804.
4. Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 15–16. Sane'eda's 1594 notes are recorded in "Sane'eda-kō go-eisō (Tanshū ni okeru)," the 1596 notes in "Sane'eda-kō zakki"; both manuscripts are in the collection of the Waseda University Library.
5. For Michikatsu's lectures to GoYōzei and his younger brother, see the *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 5 (1600).6.5, 9:158. Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 19–26, provides a detailed account of Michikatsu's literary activities during the decade 1599–1609, arguing that it was "the most brilliant period" of his life. Shōhaku (1443–1527) was the younger brother of Nakanoin Michihide (1428–94). On the Sagabon movable type printings, see Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, 131–36; for Michikatsu's editing of *Ise monogatari* and *Shōmonshō*, see Mostow, "Illustrated Texts for Women in the Edo Period," 60–62.

6. Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 228–30.
7. Kuwata, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 41; “Mitoya Tanabe ki,” cited in *Maizuru shishi: tsūshihen*, jō, 650–51.
8. All biographers agree that Gracia was the mother of sons Tadataka (1580–1646), Okiaki (1584–1615), and Tadatoshi (1586–1641), as well as daughters Chō (1579–1603) and Tara (1588–1615). Tabata, *Hosokawa Garasha*, 230, lists Gracia as the mother of another daughter, Man, born in 1598, but given that ten years had passed since the birth of Tara in 1588, it seems more likely that Man’s biological mother was one of Tadaoki’s concubines.
9. The figure of ca. 300,000 converts by the late sixteenth century and through the early years of the seventeenth is from Schütte, *Introductio ad Historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia*, 431–32. My thanks to Jurgis Elisonas for directing me to this source.
10. Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 40–41.
11. On Kiyohara Ito = Maria, see Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 223–29.
12. Ward’s translation of Fróis, in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 205, slightly adapted.
13. Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 203–8.
14. Recorded in the Hosokawa house history *Menkō shūroku*, translated in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 254–55, slightly adapted.
15. The clearest account of these negotiations is provided by Yamamoto, *Bushi to seken*, 96–101.
16. Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação Anual*, Lisboa, 1603, I, ff. 195–196, translated in Boxer, “Hosokawa Tadaoki and the Jesuits,” 94–95. This and other accounts of Gracia’s death are carefully examined in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 259–71. The summaries in Tabata, *Hosokawa Garasha*, 199–206, and Yamamoto, *Bushi to seken*, 94–104, are based principally on “Shimojo oboegaki,” a version of events written in 1648 by one of Gracia’s surviving gentlewomen.
17. Estimates of the size of the samurai population are discussed by Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 162.
18. Guerreiro, *Relação Anual*, translated in Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 266.
19. Tadatoshi, Tadaoki and Gracia’s third son, was sent to Edo as a hostage in the first month of 1600. In 1620, he succeeded to the headship of the Hosokawa house—in part because his elder brother, Tadataka, had been disinherited for refusing to divorce his wife, who “chose” not to die with her mother-in-law in Osaka. See the discussion in Yamamoto, *Bushi to seken*, 108–15.
20. Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 231–35.
21. *Menkō shūroku*, cited in *Maizuru shishi: tsūshihen*, jō, 652.
22. “Tanabe rōjō no sho,” cited in *Maizuru shishi: tsūshihen*, jō, 653.
23. *Menkō shūroku*, cited in Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 255.
24. On the origins and import of the *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū*, see Cook, “The Discipline of Poetry.”
25. For a more detailed account of Yūsai’s role as guardian of the *Secret Teachings*, see

- Ikeda-Yuba, "Triumphant Survivor," esp. chapter 5; and Ikeda, "Hosokawa Yūsai," 88–91. For a Japanese account, see Odaka, "Gosho u no seiritsu to tenkai."
26. Yūsai's holograph list, dated Keichō 5 (1600).7.29, survives in the Katsuranomiya archives of the princely house founded by Prince Toshihito. It is quoted in Kuwata, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 51–52. The "personal poetry collections of six esteemed twelfth-century poets" (*rokkashū*) are: Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114–1204), *Chōshū eisō* (1178); Fujiwara no Yoshitsune (1169–1206), *Akishino gesseishū* (1204); Jien (1155–1225), *Shūgyokushū* (1328–46); Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241), *Shūgusō* (1216); Fujiwara no Ietaka (1158–1237), *Minishū* (1245); and Saigyō (1118–90), *Sankashū* (date of compilation unknown).
  27. Hosokawa, *Shūmyōshū*, nos. 599–600, KT 9:17.
  28. *Kokinwakashū*, NKBZ 7:49.
  29. Hosokawa, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 256–57.
  30. Sakata Kichiemon, also known as Sakata Yukimasa and Sakata Sōsuke, was a commoner disciple of Yūsai. For details of his activities, see Inoue, *Chūsei kadan-shi no kenkyū: Muromachi kōki*, 704–6.
  31. Michikatsu's return to Kyoto from Tango is noted in courtier Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi's diary *Tokiyoshi ki*, entry for Keichō 5 (1600).8.19, 2:98; and his trip to Osaka is mentioned in the entry for 8.21, 2:99. On Maeda Gen'i, see the biography in *Kokushi daijiten*, 13:9–10; and Berry, "Restoring the Past."
  32. Excerpts from Mitoya Takakazu, "Mitoya Tanabe ki," translated here are from the version published in *Rekishī tokuhon*, 158–63.
  33. *Menkō shūroku*, cited in *Maizuru shishi: tsūshihihen, jō*, 662. In a careful review of the evidence, Takanashi, *GoMizuno'o-in shoki kadan no kajin no kenkyū*, 105–10, argues that Karasumaru Mitsuhiro was in fact not among the imperial envoys sent to relieve Yūsai in 1600.9. My account hews to the traditional version of events as given in Hosokawa house records.
  34. Kuwata, *Hosokawa Yūsai*, 54–55.
  35. Hosokawa, *Shūmyōshū*, nos. 601–2, KT 9:17.
  36. Fernão Guerreiro, *Relaçam Anual*, Lisboa, 1605, II, translated in Boxer, "Hosokawa Tadaoki and the Jesuits," 103–4.
  37. *A briefe relation of the persecution lately made Against the Catholike Christians, in the Kingdome of Ioponia . . .* [1619], cited in Boxer, "Hosokawa Tadaoki and the Jesuits," 108.
  38. Boxer, "Hosokawa Tadaoki and the Jesuits," 107.
  39. On the "Great Expulsion of 1614" see Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 7, 81, 332. The fate of Gracia's children is discussed on 278–80. Ward's fascinating book contains a wealth of painstakingly assembled material concerning Japanese women's encounter with Catholicism during the "Christian century." As the notes to the present chapter show, I have drawn upon Ward's research for my own study; nonetheless, for the record I should state that I remain unconvinced by her principal argument (289–90, 351–52): that Japan's ultimate rejection of Christianity was the result of the threat to Tokugawa rule posed specifically by *women's*

embrace of Catholicism. For short assessments by specialists, see Ballhatchet, "Review"; Leuchtenberger, "Review"; and Walthall, "Review."

### 3. AT THE COURT OF THE DRAGON

1. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 150–52.
2. On the restoration of the office of chancellor to the regental families and the revival of court ceremonies, see Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 112–15 and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 236–39.
3. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 6 (1601).1.19, 9:195.
4. Asai, *Nyokan tsūkai*, 91.
5. Wada, *Kanshoku yōkai*, 219.
6. Asai, *Nyokan tsūkai*, 88. For brief descriptions of each, see Wada, *Kanshoku yōkai*, 226–31.
7. Asai, *Nyokan tsūkai*, 149.
8. *Heian jidaishi jiten*, s.v. *naishi no kami*.
9. Wada, *Kanshoku yōkai*, 228. Cf. Asai, *Nyokan tsūkai*, 90–91. "Consort" translates *nyōgo*, a title that appears in neither the *Book of Rites (Liji)* nor the Taihō Code. It does appear in the later *Rites of Zhou (Zhou li)*, where it is used as the equivalent of the *gyosai* rank of imperial women. In Japanese usage, *nyōgo* refers to a higher rank of women than in the Chinese formulary, but the designated duties are the same: to bear imperial offspring. "Ladies of the wardrobe" translates the Japanese *kōi*, another title that does not appear in the *Book of Rites* or the Taihō Code. It is not utterly bereft of Chinese ancestry, however, as it does appear in the *History of the Former Han Dynasty (Qian Hanshu)*. The designated duties are to assist the emperor when he must change clothes. It is hardly surprising that assistance of this sort should lead to the production of offspring, but that was not the purpose for which the post was created. For further details, see Asai, *Nyokan tsūkai*, 100–1.
10. Arashi, "Asai Torao Sensei to *Nyokan tsūkai*," 259–60.
11. Gotō, "Naishi kō," 84.
12. "Naishi ni nasan," *Takamura monogatari*, NKBT 77:30. For a complete translation, see Mostow, *At the House of Gathered Leaves*, 164–93; the quoted passage is translated and discussed on 178–80.
13. "Nao, naishi ni mōshite nasamu," *Makura no sōshi* section 110, NKBZ 11:242. For a complete translation, see McKinney, *The Pillow Book*; the quoted passage is translated in section 101, "Around the end of the second month," 113–14.
14. Wakita, "Bakuhantaisei to josei," 3–4; Wakita, *Nihon chūsei joseishi*, 265; Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 181–82. Examples of palace attendants presenting the first produce from their official fiefs to the emperor can be found in *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entries for Keichō 6 (1601).12.12, 9:236; Keichō 9 (1604).11.28, 9:332; Keichō 12 (1607).9.16, 9:371; and Keichō 14 (1609).12.2–4, 9:450.

15. Kimura, "Kenkyū nōto Muromachi jidai chū, kōki nyōbō shoku o megutte," discusses the example of the Hirohashi family.
16. "Sanjō Sanetsumu shuroku," quoted in Tanaka, *Tennō no kenkyū*, 23–26.
17. For the following discussion of *Oyudono no ue no nikki* I am indebted to Wakita, *Nihon chūsei joseishi*, chapter 5; translated in Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 163–97. Kimura, "Kanjo ruzai jiken," 48, provides a good summary of the actual work performed by palace attendants.
18. For the English translation "Daily Records of the Honorable Ladies Serving Beyond the Bath," I am indebted to Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*.
19. Ieyasu's call at court is recorded in the lengthy *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 8 (1603).3.25, 9:254–56. Gifts of seasonal fruit appear frequently: in 1603, for example, see the entries for 6.6, 9:263 (*yamamomo* [*Myrica rubra*] from Gon no Suke) and 9.22, 9:275 (persimmons from Gon no Suke); in Keichō 9 (1604), see the entries for 6.7, 9:312 (apricots from the Consort) and 6.8, 9:312 (loquats from Iyo).
20. "Surusuru to medetashi," see, for example, *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entries for Keichō 6 (1601).10.15, 9:226; Keichō 8 (1603).3.10, 9:252; Keichō 8 (1603).7.4, 9:267; Keichō 9 (1604).1.1, 9:287; Keichō 9 (1604).4.28, 9:303.
21. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 13 (1608).7.11, 9:401–2. "Prince-Abbot of the Takenouchi Palace" translates "Takenouchi-dono." Takenouchi is another name for the Manshuin Imperial Monastery; at this time, GoYōzei's younger brother Ryōjō (1574–1643) was prince-abbot.
22. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entries for Keichō 8 (1603).10.23, 9:278–79 and 12.17, 9:285; and the entry for Keichō 9 (1604).1.18, 9:293–94. The palace attendant was Niwata Tomoko (?–1626). Her child, known to posterity as Cloistered Prince Ryōjun (1603–69), was brought up at the Chion'in and made a monk in 1619.
23. "Asagarei minamina tenashi nite nashi," *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 13 (1608).7.6, 9:401; "Asagarei wa mina tenashi yue nashi," *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 13 (1608).9.9, 9:406. An example of the alternative arrangements that were sometimes necessary may be found in the entry for Keichō 12 (1607).3.9, 9:351.
24. The rotation of palace attendants (known to their colleagues as *o-kisaki nyokan-san* or *o-soba-san*) to sleep with the emperor is discussed by two former palace attendants in an interview that appears in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Ama-monzeiki*, 220–87; see esp. 225–28.
25. The marriage of Onnasannomiya (Princess Kiyoko) is noted in the *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 9 (1604).7.27, 9:318; the birth of her first child appears in the entry for Keichō 12 (1607).1.22, 9:345; her coming-of-age (*binsogi*) is described in the entry for Keichō 13 (1608).6.16, 9:398–99; and the birth of her son, the future Takatsukasa Norihira, on Keichō 14 (1609).2.4, 9:421, is the occasion for much rejoicing.
26. Kimura, "Kanjo ruzai jiken," 47.
27. These are Anne Walthall's observations, in her "Introducing Palace Women," 13.
28. The mother of Emperor GoNara (1496–1557; r. 1526–57) was Assistant Chief



- Palace Attendant Kanshūji Fujiko (1464–1535). The mother of Emperor Reigen (1654–1732; r. 1663–87) was Assistant Chief Palace Attendant Sono Motoko (1624–77); the mother of Emperor Nakamikado (1702–37; r. 1709–35) was Senior Secretary of Palace Attendants (*kōtō no naishi*) Kushige Yoshiko (1675–1710). The mother of Emperor Taishō (1879–1926; r. 1912–26), Yanagihara Naruko (1859–1943), entered palace service in 1870.
29. See the list of GoYōzei's children and their mothers in Ōta, *Keizu kōyō*, 114–16.
  30. “Lady Hirohashi” translates Hirohashi no Tsubone, “Lady Karahashi” translates Karahashi no Tsubone. These two palace attendants are described as the emperor's favorites in *Tokugawa jikki* 1, KST 38:489, and in *Tōdai ki*, cited in DNS 12.6:535–36. Both sources mistakenly identify Nakako as Karahashi no Tsubone, and this has given rise to confusion: Tsunoda, *Nihon no kōkyū*, 351, for example, repeats the error.
  31. See, for example, entries in *Oyudono no ue no nikki* for Keichō 9 (1604).9.21, 9:327–28; Keichō 13 (1608).7.11, 9:401–2; and Keichō 14 (1609).4.1, 9:426.
  32. *Tokiyoshi ki*, entries for Keichō 8 (1603).5.4–7, 3:52–53. “Abbess of the Kōshōin” translates “Kōshōin-dono” in the entry for Keichō 8 (1603).5.6.
  33. *Keichō nikkenroku*, the diary of court Sinologist Funabashi Hidekata (1575–1614), entry for Keichō 8 (1603).5.6, cited in DNS 12.1:296: “clear. At the palace of the Empress Mother, there was kabuki dancing. It is said that [the dancers] were from the province of Izumo. It was a party given by the Consort. A great many of the inner circle (*uchiuchishū*) were invited.” I am grateful to Professor Hirose Chisako of Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts for pointing out that this is the first known use of the term *kabuki odori*.
  34. From the chronicle *Tōdai ki*, covering the period from the 1530s through 1615 and compiled by a person or persons unknown, cited in DNS 12.1:259. Fushimi Castle was originally constructed on Hideyoshi's orders as his retirement abode, then taken over by Ieyasu in 1599 after Hideyoshi's death, and finally dismantled in 1623–24.
  35. Hidetada seems to have relented, for O-Kuni performed at Edo Castle in 1607, on the same program as the perfectly respectable Kanze and Konparu troupes of Noh actors. On the attempts of the Tokugawa shogunate to control kabuki, see Shively, “*Bakufu* versus *Kabuki*.”
  36. Ariyoshi Sawako's novel *Kabuki Dancer* (1972; trans. 1994) is a less than successful attempt to depict O-Kuni as an artist in the romantic mold.
  37. A description of the “Chaya asobi” skit as depicted in *O-Kuni kabuki zōshi*, in the collection of the Museum Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, reproduced as item 3 in *Kagayakeru Keichō jidai no bijutsu*, 14, discussed 105–6.
  38. See the “Chaya asobi” skit as depicted in *Kabuki zukan*, in the collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya, reproduced as item 4 in *Kagayakeru Keichō jidai no bijutsu*, 16–17, discussed 106–7.
  39. A description of the “Nenbutsu odori” skit as depicted in *O-Kuni kabuki zōshi*, reproduced as item 3 in *Kagayakeru Keichō jidai no bijutsu*, 15, discussed 106.



40. A description of the audience watching the “Chaya asobi” skit as depicted in *Kabuki zukan*, reproduced in *Kagayakeru Keichō jidai no bijutsu*, 16–17.
41. DNS 12.1:260.
42. Performances of *yayako odori* at the imperial palace are mentioned in *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entries for Keichō 8 (1603).2.30, 9:251, and Keichō 8 (1603).5.6, 9:261.
43. “Dancing in Praise of the Buddha” (Nenbutsu odori), as depicted in *Kunijo kabuki ekotoba* (*Kuni Kabuki in Pictures and Words*), a *nara ehon* in the collection of Kyoto University Library, available at <http://edb.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/exhibit/okuni/eng/okuindex.html>.

#### 4. SCANDAL

1. *Rokuon nichiroku*, entry for Keichō 10 (1605).3.18, DNS 12.3:243–44.
2. *Rokuon nichiroku*, entry for Keichō 10 (1605).6.18, DNS 12.3:244.
3. “Familiar name” translates the Japanese *tsūshō*. Biographical information from *Kokushi daijiten*, s.v. “Itakura Katsushige.”
4. *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki*, entries for Keichō 10 (1605).6.12–17, DNS 12.3:241.
5. Letter dated [1605].6.15 from Itakura Iga-no-Kami to military liaison officers (*buke tensō*) Hirohashi Kanekatsu and Kanshūji Mitsutoyo, in *Tokitsune-kyō ki*, entry for Keichō 10 (1605).6.16, DNS 12.3:241–42.
6. Hinotani, *Edo jidai no jikenchō*, 101–3, citing *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 11 (1606).5.10, KST 38:408. The offender was the Tokugawa bannerman (*hatamoto*) Matsudaira Wakasa-no-Kami Chikatsugu (d. 1612). Noma Kōshin argued persuasively that the early seventeenth-century narrative *Uraminosuke* is a fictional retelling of this scandal. See his untitled introduction to *Uraminosuke*, 185–90.
7. *Tokitsune-kyō ki*, entry for Keichō 12 (1607).2.12, and *Tokio-kyō ki*, entries for Keichō 12 (1607).2.11–12, DNS 12.4:648.
8. Numerous examples are quoted in Kimura, “Kanjo ruzai jiken,” 49; and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 353, notes 44 and 45.
9. Translation from Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 171, slightly adapted. The passage is from the miscellany *Kyōgō zakki*, compiled in the later Tokugawa period, quoted in DNS 12.6:728–30. Another transcription of this account of the dragon-scale scandal may be found in Shinohara, “Inokuma jiken to Yonosuke,” 18–19.
10. This description of Inokuma as “the most debauched of all the court nobles” (*kugeshū rankō no zuiichi*) is found in *Tōdai ki*, DNS 12.6:725.
11. *Minamoto Yukinaka ki*, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).1.12, DNS 12.6:24.
12. Motoko was the daughter of Jimyōin Mototaka (1520–1611). Her son by GoYōzei, Cloistered Prince Gyōnen (1602–61), was brought up at the Myōhōin Imperial Monastery, where he was subsequently appointed prince-abbot.
13. “Senior secretary of palace attendants” translates *kōtō no naishi*, the senior of the four *naishi no jō*. On *nyōbō hōsho* and the duties of the *kōtō no naishi*, see Wakita,

*Nihon chūsei joseishi*, 164–78; and Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 96–110. Griolet, “Écrits de femmes et pourvoir suprême,” analyzes several examples of *nyōbō hōsho*.

14. DNS 12.6:23–24. The suggestion is made by the editors of DNS at 12.6:23. Her subsequent dismissal on 1610.12.25 is noted in DNS 12.7:860–61.
15. All scholars of the period agree on this point: see, for example, Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 134; Kubo, *GoMizuno'o tennō*, 14–15; and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 184.
16. *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki* entries for Keichō 14 (1609).6.17 (rumors circulate); 6.25, 6.26, and 6.27 (Tokiyoshi is interrogated by the emperor's wet nurse); 6.29 (it is forbidden to enter the empress mother's apartments), DNS 12.6:396–97.
17. *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, entries for Keichō 14 (1609).7.1–4, 9:433.
18. *Takasuke Sukune hinami no ki*, the diary of courtier Mibu Takasuke (1575–1652), entries for Keichō 14 (1609).7.4 and 7.5, in DNS 12.6:398–99. “Matsunoki” was an alternative name for the Nakamikado aristocratic family. (The Nakanomikado are a different family.)
19. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 189.
20. “Kaneyasu o gōmon serareshi ni, kotogotoku hakujō seshikaba” (Kaneyasu was subjected to torture. He confessed everything, right down to the last detail), *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).7.14, KST 38:489. The likely source for this information is the official history of the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate, *Butoku taiseiki*, completed in 1686, which states: “Bingo-no-Kami o torae gōmon shikereba, hakujō su” (When Bingo was arrested and tortured, he confessed). For this earlier account of the dragon-scale scandal, see “Taishokan no zō haretsu no koto,” in *Butoku taiseiki* 22, *Naikaku Bunko shozō shiseki sōkan* 93:234–36.
21. *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki* entries for Keichō 14 (1609).7.5 (“Kōdaiin-dono,” i.e., Nei); 7.8 (“Ōsaka no himegimi,” i.e., Tokugawa Sen), DNS 12.6:397–98.
22. “Tōnomine haretsu no ki” (1610), DNS 12.6:401–2.
23. *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).7.7–8, 9:433–34. The poem is *Hyakunin isshu* no. 64, but was first collected as *Senzaiwakashū* no. 419.
24. Kimura, “Kanjo ruzai jiken,” 54.
25. *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).7.14, 9:436.
26. “Ganzen nite, arakenaki goseibai o” in “Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 464. “Tōnomine haretsu no ki,” DNS 12.6:401–2, and *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).7.14, KST 38:489, also note that the emperor called for the guilty to be put to death.
27. Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 134–35, elaborates on the degree to which GoYōzei's demand for the death penalty was unprecedented.
28. “Kinchū mukashi yori kakaru tagui naki ni arazu,” *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).9.23, KST 38:493.
29. Translation from Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 660. Cf. SNKBZ 23:254–55.
30. “As for the unrestrained behavior of the women” translates “kondo no jochū no rantai” in *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).8.4, 9:437–38. In

- a rare editorial interpolation, it is suggested that *rantai* (unrestrained behavior) should be read simply *shintai* (behavior).
31. There is no mention whatsoever of the dragon-scale scandal in the official record of GoYōzei's life, *GoYōzei tennō jitsuroku*.
  32. The birth is noted in *Oyudono no ue no nikki*, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).5.2, 9:428; and discussed at length in *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki*, DNS 12.6:316–17. The girl was made a nun in 1624, her sixteenth year; her religious name was Eisō. She served for a time as abbess of the Daishōji Imperial Convent and died in 1690, aged 82.
  33. *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki* entry for Keichō 14 (1609).7.16, DNS 12.6:431.
  34. Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 25; Inoue, *Chūsei kadanshi no kenkyū*: *Muromachi kōki*, 700; Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki kenkyū*, 247. Chikafusa's work is entitled *Shokugenshō* and was completed in 1340.
  35. Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 137; Fujii, *Edo kaibaku*, 97; Fujii, “Edo bakufu no seiritsu to tennō,” 119–20; Kubo, *Kinsei no chōtei un'ei*, 36–39. Kubo's account is particularly attentive to the role of GoYōzei's mother in the scandal.
  36. Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 138; Fujii, “Edo bakufu no seiritsu to tennō,” 120; Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 177.
  37. Nakanoin, *Michikatsu shū*, nos. 1310–11, KT 8:804.
  38. Gyūichi's biography of Nobunaga is entitled *Shinchō-kō ki* (The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga, ca. 1610); his biography of Hideyoshi is *Taikōsama gunki no uchi* (From the Military Record of His Lordship the Retired Imperial Regent, early seventeenth century); and his battle account is *Sekigahara gokassen no sōshi* (Book of the Battle of Sekigahara). Translations of these three titles are by Elisonas and Lamers, in Ōta, *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 25.
  39. *Book of Courtiers Recently in the News* is Elisonas and Lamers's translation of Gyūichi's title *Kondo no kuge no sōshi*, in Ōta, *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga*, 26. The holograph, dated Keichō 15 (1610).2.2, survives in the collection of the Osaka Museum of History. There are also several printed versions: the one translated here is “Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki” (Memorandum of Ōta, Governor of Izumi), in *Kaitei shiseki shūran*, 17:462–71. I have also consulted the other, slightly different, “Tsunoda monjo” version scattered through DNS 12.6. Page citations in the notes are to the text in *Kaitei shiseki shūran*.
  40. “Rankō pātei,” Tsunoda, *Nihon no kōkyū*, 350.
  41. Fukui Teisuke suggested in “Kasannoin Tadanaga to Azuma kudari,” 43, that this poem alludes to a poem by retired Emperor Sutoku (1119–64; r. 1123–41), exiled to the province of Sanuki (present-day Kagawa Prefecture) following the failed Hōgen Rebellion of 1156. The retired emperor's poem is collected in *Senzaiwakashū*, no. 122 (SNKBT 10:46): *hana wa ne ni / tori wa furu su ni / kaeru nari / haru no tomari o / shiru hito zo naki*; “Blossoms return to their roots and birds to their old nests. But where spring goes when it is over—there is no one who knows this.”
  42. Gyūichi is mistaken in suggesting that Asukai and Nanba were banished to “the island of the Ebisu” like Kasannoin Tadanaga: Asukai was sent to the island of Oki and Nanba to the province of Izu.

43. A near-quotation from chapter 3 of *Heike monogatari*, NKBZ 29:258, where the speaker is Minamoto no Sukekata (1113–88), stripped of his court offices and banished from the capital in the eleventh month of 1179.
44. Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 465–67.
45. There is no indication that the poem is a quotation in either of the printed texts of “Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki” that I have consulted, and exhaustive checks have failed to turn up a possible source. Perhaps it is Gyūichi’s own composition.
46. The DNS editors note (at 12.6:684) that Gyūichi’s eleventh month is an error for tenth month. Gyūichi has the women arriving in Sunpu on 10.13, but modern commentators (Fujii, “Edo bakufu no seiritsu to tennō,” 120; Hinotani, *Edo jidai no jikenchō*, 117) prefer 10.11.
47. “Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 469–70.
48. Inokuma’s arrest on 9.16 is noted in *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).9.18, KST 38:493. The letter, dated [1609].9.25, from Honda Masanobu (1538–1616) in the service of Shogun Hidetada, to two elders in the service of Satake Yoshinobu (1570–1633), daimyo of Kubota in the province of Dewa (present-day Akita Prefecture), informing them that Inokuma has been apprehended in Hyūga and they may therefore discontinue their search for him, is printed in DNS 12.6:724 and discussed in Takagi, *Edo bakufu*, 59–61.
49. Nanba Munekatsu = Asukai Masatane changed his name again in 1628. As Asukai Masanobu, he served as military liaison officer from 1640.12.28 until his death on 1651.3.21. Name changes from *Kugyō bunin*, cited in Hashimoto, *Kuge jiten*, s.v. “Asukai Masanobu.”
50. Details from Hirai, “Edo jidai no kuge no ruzai ni tsuite,” 276. On the long history of Ainu-Japanese trading relations and Ieyasu’s confirmation of the Matsumae family’s exclusive rights, see Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 26–27, 35–39.
51. These details are from the gazetteer of Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga provinces (present-day Satsuma and Miyazaki prefectures), *Satsu-gū-nichi chiri sankō*, 121.
52. Personal communication from Mrs Kaneda Noriko, née Asukai, Kyoto, November 28, 2000. The “playboy aristocrat” description is from Koishi, *Runin hyakuwa*, 59; a photograph of Asukai’s grave on Ōki appears on 61.
53. Noma Kōshin, in his entry on Karasumaru Mitsuhiro in *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, 2:30, identifies his wife as “the widow of Yūki Hideyasu,” a son of Tokugawa Ieyasu who had been adopted first by Hideyoshi and second by Yūki Harutomo.
54. The imperial pardons (*chokumen*) of Karasumaru Mitsuhiro and Tokudaiji Sanehisa are noted in *Kugyō bunin*, cited in DNS 12.8:69.

## 5. THE TALE OF KAZAN

1. I use the term “novelette” here simply in an attempt to encapsulate the salient features of *The Tale of Kazan*—its brevity and light, ironic take on events—in a single English word. Hitherto, scholars have classified *Kazan monogatari* as a *kanazōshi*, literally “kana booklet.” Here is not the place for a disquisition on this

- amorphous “supposed genre” of Japanese fiction; the interested reader should consult Moretti, “*Kanazōshi* Revisited” and “Narrativity and Fictionality in Edo-Period Prose Literature,” to both of which I am indebted for my understanding of the generic conventions that characterize seventeenth-century vernacular prose.
2. On the vexed issue of transliterations from premodern Japanese, see Butler, “Language Change and ‘Proper’ Transliterations.” In this book, I have generally preferred contemporary—that is, seventeenth-century—pronunciations where they can be ascertained.
  3. Asakura and Fukasawa, *Kazan monogatari*, 269, suggest that the tale was complete by the Meireki period (1655–57); Yokoyama and Mori, *Kazan monogatari*, 423, prefer the slightly later cut-off date of the Manji period (1658–60). Neither pair of editors seems to have been aware that the five women were released from their sentence of banishment in 1623, a fact that I suggest provides a possible terminus ante quem for the tale.
  4. There are two printed editions of the single manuscript in the collection of the National Diet Library, one edited by Yokoyama and Mori, the other edited by Asakura and Fukasawa. Neither is annotated. Yokoyama and Mori at least make a stab at interpreting some two dozen obscure passages, mostly by suggesting kanji for the kana text, and I have followed the majority of their suggestions in my translation. Occasionally, however, even they seem stymied: “perhaps a Song [dynasty] poem,” they note of one passage; and “requires further investigation” of another (both 426.) The translation offered here thus represents my own tentative interpretation of this fascinating text. It is only lightly annotated, and doubtless colleagues will recognize allusions that I have missed. Asakura and Fukasawa, 269, note that another manuscript of *Kazan monogatari* appeared in a Hongō bookseller’s catalogue in 1994 before promptly disappearing again; this manuscript has yet to be identified and studied.
  5. An allusion to a poem sent by the hero of *Tales of Ise*, section 19, to a former ladylove in palace service who now has another lover: “That I, like a cloud in the heavens, drift so far away is because such intense winds blow from the mount where I would wish to be.”
  6. An allusion to a poem by Lady Sagami in the early thirteenth-century anthology *Shinkokinwakashū*, no. 1166, in which she laments rumors that have exposed the cooling of her lover’s ardor: “What am I to do? Like dew on the underside of arrowroot leaves exposed by autumn winds, there is no place to hide myself.” In *The Tale of Kazan* it is the intensity of the would-be lovers’ ardor that is the problem.
  7. An allusion to a poem sent by the hero of *Tales of Ise*, section 2, to one of his ladyloves after a clandestine tryst with her: “Neither waking nor yet asleep, I passed the long night, only to spend the day quite the thrall of spring, gazing listlessly at the rain.” In both *Ise* and *The Tale of Kazan*, the lady in question has a prior attachment.
  8. An ill-omened allusion to the story related in the eighth-century collection of poetry *Man’yōshū*, nos. 1809–11, of the maiden Unai, for whose favors many vied and three—the maiden and two suitors—died.

9. The text gives Ōi Chūnagon (Ōi Middle Counselor). Since he is referred to below by his correct title, Chūjō (Colonel), for the sake of consistency I have preferred to use it here too. I have also used the full version of his family name, Ōinomikado, throughout the translation.
10. “Rowdiest young men in the land” translates *tenka no kabukimono*. I am indebted to Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 171, for his translation of *kabukimono* as “young rowdy.”
11. Here I omit a passage of seventeen (Yokoyama and Mori) or twenty-one (Asakura and Fukusawa) lines in which Matsunoshita attempts to associate his house with the imperial house by rattling off the names of twenty-some early emperors together with the several locations of their courts. As Moretti, “*Kanazōshi* Revisited,” 323, 326–32, demonstrates, such digressions, or “nonnarrative” episodes, are a distinctive feature of seventeenth-century popular prose.
12. The text reads *kenjo ryōfu ni mamieneba* (“a worthy woman does not have two husbands”), a variation on the notion that “a chaste woman does not have two husbands” (*teijo ryōfu ni mamiezu*). The original maxim, “a loyal subject does not serve two lords, a chaste wife does not take to herself two husbands,” is found in chapter 82 of the *Shiji* (Jp. *Shiki*). English translation from Watson, *Records of the Historian*, 34.
13. The text reads *kuruto no hyōfu*, which Yokoyama and Mori, *Kazan monogatari*, 425, suggest might be understood as *kurodo no byōbu*, that is, a folding screen (*byōbu*) in the Black Door Room (*kurodo no goshō*), a room in the imperial palace that was stained black with smoke.
14. Both islands feature in *The Tale of the Heike*: Hirugashima as the river islet on the Izu Peninsula where the young Minamoto no Yoritomo was banished in 1160 following his father’s failed attempt to seize power from the Heike hegemon Taira no Kiyomori; Kikaigashima as the island off the southern tip of Kyushu where in 1177 three of those involved in a subsequent plot to overthrow Kiyomori were banished.
15. Present-day Nobeoka in Miyazaki Prefecture.
16. “Meeting Slope” (Ausaka) was the site of an ancient barrier gate that regulated traffic between Kyoto and the eastern provinces. The crowing of the cockerel signals the opening of the gate, and so the women’s departure from the capital.
17. Because “to be rowed” (*kogarete*) also means “to burn with longing.” The “Sea of Grebes” (Nionoumi) is an old name for Lake Biwa, which would come into view as the women descend Meeting Slope.
18. “Mirror Mountain” (Kagamiyama) lies farther down the road that follows the shoreline of Lake Biwa. The allusion is to a verse in the *Kokinwakashū*, no. 899: “O Mirror Mountain! Let me approach and have a look as I go by, to see whether with the passing years I have grown old.”
19. Ono too lies near the shores of Lake Biwa. The “banished Prince” is Munetaka (1242–74), a son of Emperor GoSaga (1220–72; r. 1242–46), who was appointed sixth Kamakura shogun in 1252, only to be deposed in 1266 and sent back to Kyoto. On his return journey to the capital, he composed this poem lamenting

his deposition: "I live on, resting from my travels in Ono, where the hue of the reeds, like my dismal life, grows sere as I dampen my sleeves." The poem is collected in his *Chūshō gyoēi*, no. 226, KT 7:400.

20. A poetic topos where the thoughts of eastbound travelers turned back to the capital they had left behind, as in this poem from the *Gosenwakashū*, no. 1313: "Now that you are leaving, bound for your old home, on the road at the Fuwa Barrier forget not the capital."
21. A poetic topos that was also a famous "peril" (*nansho*) on the Eastern Sea Road just beyond the Nissaka station, being a narrow mountain path with ravines on either side. The allusion is to a verse in the *Kokinwakashū*, no. 594: "Mount Sayanonakayama on the road to the east—why oh why was I such a fool as to fall in love with her?"
22. The Ōi River marked the border between the province of Tōtōmi and the province of Suruga, where the women are headed.
23. An allusion to the famous "journey to the East" passage in *Tales of Ise*, section 9, where the hero and his friends arrive at Mount Utsu in Suruga only to find the narrow path dark and overgrown with ivy and maples. "What a dreadful experience this is," the hero observes, whereupon he meets up with a wandering ascetic, whom he asks to carry a message back to his love in the capital. In *The Tale of Kazan*, the concubines meet not an ascetic but a traveling peddler, who brings (bad) news from the capital to them.
24. A reference to the Buddhist notion that "sheltering under the same tree and drinking from the same river are the result of bonds from a previous life" (*ichiju no kage ichiga no nagare mo tashō no en*), from the collection of homilies *Seppō meigen ron*, traditionally attributed to Shōtoku Taishi. The saying is referred to several times in *The Tale of the Heike*: in chapter 1, NKBZ 29:54; chapter 7, NKBZ 30:111; and chapter 10, NKBZ 30:307.
25. The *Meditation Sutra* (*Kanmuryōju kyō*) teaches that to chant ten times the praises of Amida Buddha before death assures one of rebirth in Amida's paradise.
26. An allusion to a poem quoted in chapter 2 of *The Tale of the Heike*, NKBZ 29:165: "Will the light of the moon that should be rising illuminate the shade beneath the pine of Akoya in far Michinoku?" In *The Tale of Kazan*, Inokuma hides in the "shade" of his palanquin precisely to avoid the "moonlight" of his death sentence falling on him.
27. In fact he says no such thing. The story of Han Xin (Jp. Kanshin, d. 196 B.C.), put to death on the orders of the wicked Empress Lü (Jp. Ryokō, d. 180 B.C.), is found in chapter 92 of the *Shiji*. For an English translation, see Watson, *Records of the Historian*, 176–200.
28. A quotation from chapter 2 of the *Lotus Sutra*, the most important sutra for adherents of the Hokke sect to which Kaneyasu claims to belong. Translation from Watson, *Lotus Sutra*, 41.
29. In 1185 the child Emperor Antoku (1178–85; r. 1180–85) drowned with most of his mother's family, the Heike, at the Battle of Dannoura, fought in the Shimono-



seki Straits between Honshu and Kyushu. The Juei era (1182–85) during Antoku's short reign was marred by military revolt and epidemics.

30. A port on the old Yodo River in Osaka.
31. Because *awaji* can also mean "shall not meet."
32. "Thunder Coast" (Hibikinonada) refers to the rough seas off the coast of the province of Harima, present-day Hyōgo Prefecture. The allusion that suggests itself is to the poem spoken by Tamakazura's nurse as she and her party travel in the opposite direction, from Kyushu to the capital, escaping from her mistress's would-be lover, the rough and ready audit commissioner. In Tyler's translation (*The Tale of Genji*, 413): "With our misfortunes stirring such a thunderous storm here within my breast, / there is nothing frightening about the Thundering Coast!"
33. Moji, on the northern tip of Kyushu (Tsukushi), was the site of a checkpoint established to control shipping through the narrow channel separating Kyushu from Honshu. It had long since fallen into disuse and become a symbol of desolation.
34. Hakozaki faces on Hakata Bay and is the site of a shrine dedicated to the legendary Emperor Ōjin, his mother Jingū, and Tamayorihime no mikoto, the mother of Emperor Jinmu.
35. "The Matsura shore" (Matsuragata) along the Bay of Karatsu was famous for its groves of pine, curved in the shape of a rainbow, thus "mirage."
36. Shunkan's pitiful story is told in chapter 3 of *The Tale of the Heike*, NKBZ 29:200–6, 226–36. Banished to Kikaigashima with two others following the failure of a plot against Taira no Kiyomori in 1177, he was not reprieved when his coconspirators were released from their sentence and died on the island in 1179.
37. The allusion is to a poem sent by the lovelorn hero of *Tales of Ise*, section 57, to a woman who does not requite his affections: "Sick with love, like those shrimp said to dwell in seaweed harvested by fisherfolk, I have brought upon myself mine own ruin."
38. Suzuki Ken'ichi, "Inokuma jiken tenmatsu," 246, suggested that this section of *The Tale of Kazan* draws upon the "Sotoba nagashi" (Stupas Cast Afloat) section in chapter 2 of *The Tale of the Heike*, NKBZ 29:185–89. In the *Heike* story, one of the three exiles of Kikaigashima decides to carve a thousand stupas, all marked with the Sanskrit letter "A," his name, the date, and two poems, and cast them into the sea. One of the stupas is washed ashore at Itsukushima Shrine, found by a monk who understands the message it conveys, and carried by him to the capital, where it is shown to the exile's surviving family, the retired emperor, and eventually Taira no Kiyomori himself, the hegemon responsible for the men's banishment. The allusion to this older tale here is of course ironic: in *Heike*, the carver of the stupas, Tanba no Yasuyori, is a political exile who is eventually released; in *Kazan*, the carver of the fishing rod, "the Kazan Major," is banished for sexual misconduct and never reprieved.
39. Her concern is for the two men who had drawn her as their partner in the lottery described earlier in the tale.



40. The text of the poem that follows is a slight misquotation of a Chinese-style poem by Ōe no Asatsuna (866–957) collected in *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 545, NKBT 73:189. As Rimer and Chaves, *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing*, 165, explain, the poem refers to the Chinese legend of Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao of the Han who, lost on Mount Tiantai, cavorted with some women immortals, only to find when they arrived home that seven generations had passed. In *The Tale of Kazan*, the acting assistant suggests that she and the other concubines are the women immortals, and that if the men ever return to their “old village” the capital, so many years will have passed that it will be as if they were to meet their “grandchildren in the seventh generation.”
41. Li Ling (also known as Li Shaoqing, d. 74 B.C.) was a general who was sent to fight against the Xiongnu; faced with annihilation, he surrendered in order to save his troops. Unlike his colleague Su Wu, who was rescued and returned to China after nineteen years in captivity, Li Ling was never released and died in exile. His story is recounted in chapter 109 of the *Shiji* (Watson, *Records of the Historian*, 272–73) and elsewhere; but the more likely source as far as *The Tale of Kazan* is concerned is the version given at the end of chapter 2 of *The Tale of the Heike*, NKBT 29:190–93.
42. The closest I have been able to come to identifying the poem that the Kan Palace Attendant recalls here is the line from a longer poem by Bai Juyi (772–846) quoted in *Wakan rōeishū*, no. 151, NKBT 73:85. In the translation by Rimer and Chaves, *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing*, 62: “Nights when breezes blow from bamboo / I sleep beside the window; / times when the moon illuminates the pines, / I walk out on the terrace.”
43. And as Shinohara Susumu argued in “Inokuma jiken to Yonosuke,” Inokuma in his turn is the figure behind several seventeenth-century fictional lovers up to and including Yonosuke, the hero of Ihara Saikaku’s *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (*The Life of an Amorous Man*, 1682).

## 6. SHIPWRECK

1. Translation by Janine Beichman, from Kasanoin, *In Iris Fields*, 105.
2. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entry for Keichō 14 (1609).10.1, 9:444. Since the women departed for Suruga, where Tokugawa Ieyasu lived in retirement, “shogun” here clearly means “former shogun.”
3. *Oyudono no ue no nikki* entries for Keichō 14 (1609).12.27 (*Gojō no ohime*) and 12.28 (*Nakanomikado no ohime*), both 9:453.
4. Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, 283.
5. Mitamura, “Dōchūki ga ataeru mondai,” 220.
6. *Michikatsu shū* nos. 1310–37, KT 8:804. Poems 1310–11 are translated in chapter 4, p. 89 above.
7. The traditional etymology is incorrect: the *na* in *kaminazuki* is an early form of *no*; thus *kaminazuki* properly means “month of gods.”

8. The notations “second day” (*futsuka*) and “third day, toward evening” (*mikka no yūgure ni*) appear in the version of Michikatsu’s poems given in DNS 12.6:687–90.
9. Watson, *Lotus Sutra*, ix–xxix.
10. Ken’nyo was a linked-verse master patronized by the Date warrior family. He also frequented literary circles in the capital; his last known work is a hundred-link sequence composed with Konoe Nobutada. According to his biography in *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, 2:455, his dates of birth and death are unknown; his death date of 1609.9 is from the article on his son Ken’yo in *Waka daijiten*, 296.
11. Translation from Watson, *Lotus Sutra*, 231–32.
12. Unfortunately, *Sunpu ki*, the official record of Ieyasu’s movements during the last years of his life, begins only in Keichō 16 (1611).8.1, almost two years after the women had been sent into exile. The drama was NHK’s *Aoi Tokugawa sandai* (2000), which featured two egregious episodes about the dragon-scale scandal; the actress Saitō Kaori played Nakako.
13. Suzuki, “Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun,” 2, writes that the women were sentenced by Ide Shima-no-Kami Masatsugu, but according to his biography in *Kansei chōshū shokafu*, 17:93–94, he had died earlier that year, on 1609.2.26. On Hikosaka Mitsumasa (1555?–1623), see *Kansei chōshū shokafu*, 6:25.
14. *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 14 (1609).10.10, KST 38:498, records that the women were banished to Hachijōjima, the most distant of the seven Izu islands some 180 miles south of Edo. The account in the earlier *Butoku taiseiki*, 93:235, mentions only three women and records that they were banished to Ōshima and Hachijōjima. The majority of modern commentators follow Gyūichi, who states (“Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki,” 470) that the women’s destination was Nijima.
15. The story of Emperor GoToba’s (1180–1239; r. 1183–98) failed rebellion against the Kamakura shogunate, the so-called Jōkyū Disturbance, is narrated in chapter 2 of *Masukagami* (*The Clear Mirror*, ca. 1376), by an unknown author. For the poem quoted here, see NKBT 87:279; and the English version in Perkins, *The Clear Mirror*, 55.
16. Suzuki, “Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun,” 3.
17. *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, s.v. “Entō”; and Koishi, *Edo no rukei*, 24–32, 76–80, 83–88.
18. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 108–9; Bruschke-Johnson, *Dismissed as Elegant Fossils*, 39–41, 65–66.
19. *Michikatsu shū* nos. 1322–26, KT 8:804.
20. This anecdote about Michimura was recorded by GoMizuno’ō’s son Emperor Reigen (1654–1732; r. 1663–87) in “Itsuya zuihitsu,” cited in Kusaka, “Nakanoin Michimura nenpu kō: Shōseinen-ki,” 18.
21. Translated from the citation in Inoue, “Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai,” 26.
22. Tokiko’s second child by GoYōzei was born on Keichō 15 (1610).8.26. Various secondary sources describe the child as a girl, but the entry describing the birth in *Tokiyoshi-kyō ki*, cited in DNS 12.7:258, refers to the baby as *wakamiya*, i.e., a boy. According to the imperial genealogy *Honchō kōin jōunroku*, cited in

- DNS 12.7:260 and DNS 12.10:10, the child died on Keichō 17 (1612).8.7, just short of its second birthday. Shirakawa Masatomo (1555–1631) was Michikatsu's elder brother by "a gentlewoman in the house" (*ie nyōbō*) of their father, Michitame.
23. Kusaka, "Nakanoin Michimura nenpu kō: Shōseinen-ki," 28, argues that for procedural reasons, Michikatsu cannot have passed the *Secret Teachings of the Kokinshū* (*Kokin denju*) to Michimura on his deathbed. The issue has yet to be resolved: even Takanashi Motoko, author of the most detailed account of Michimura's poetic activities to date (*GoMizuno'o-in shoki kadan no kajin no kenkyū*, chapters 6 and 7) has nothing to say on the subject.
  24. My account of Michikatsu's last movements, his death, and contemporaries' reactions is based on Inoue, "Yasokuken Nakanoin Michikatsu no shōgai," 26.
  25. *Tokugawa jikki* 1, entry for Keichō 15 (1610).3.25, KST 38:513–14. I am indebted to Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki kenkyū*, 244, for drawing this passage to my attention.
  26. For the original context of Gyūichi's quotation, see chapter 16 of *Masukagami*, NKBT 87:461; and the English version in Perkins, *The Clear Mirror*, 200. Emperor GoDaigo's (1288–1339; r. 1318–39) exile lasted only a year. In the sixth month of 1333 he made a triumphant return to the capital.
  27. "Ōta Izumi-no-Kami oboegaki," 470–71.
  28. Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), *Heishin kikō* (1616), cited in DNS 12.6:686.
  29. "Irōzaki tōdai," in *Shizuoka-ken seishi kakei daijiten*, 161.
  30. Tachibana, *Tōyūki*, 98–99. On Tachibana Nankei's travelogues, see Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 90–97. Yoshimura Akira's novel *Shipwrecks* (1982; trans. 2001) is a haunting evocation of life in an isolated fishing village where survival depends on the occasional bounty from wrecking.
  31. Tachibana, *Tōyūki*, 98.
  32. Suzuki, "Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun," 4.

## 7. THE LONG REPRIEVE

1. *Shizuoka-ken Kamo-gun shi*, 126, 647–48. Morikawa, "Genji hitobito kokoro kurabe," 34, mistakenly refers to this publication as *Shizuoka-ken Shimokamo-gun shi*. The title of the 1914 first publication is *Nanzu fūdo shi*.
2. The thirty-five-volume compilation *Shizuoka-ken shi* mentions the dragon-scale scandal in three separate entries (2:503, 3:173, and 7:153), but nothing is said about the concubines' exile to Nijima, Nakako's shipwreck at Nagatsuro, or her subsequent movements. Suzuki Ken'ichi's essay "Inokuma jiken tenmatsu" and Nishiyama Mika's essay "Genji-e" would appear to be the exceptions to the prevailing ignorance concerning Nakako's fate—except that the latter dismisses the evidence as "a stereotypical tale of the exile of a noble hero" (189).
3. "Edo-ki no muramura," in *Shizuoka-ken seishi kakei daijiten*, 161.
4. Information on the Misu is from the entry on the family in *Shizuoka-ken seishi kakei daijiten*, 638; and Suzuki, "Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun," 5.

5. Kikuchi, "Kutta-ke" MS.
6. This figure is from the entry for Nijō-mura in (*Zōtei*) *Zushū shikō*, vol. 3, no. 2, 78 recto and verso. The original gazetteer, entitled *Zushū shikō*, was compiled by Akiyama Akira, style Funan (1723–1808), during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the manuscript submitted to the shogunate in 1800. The editor of the published version cited here, Hagiwara Shōhei (1838–91), carefully indicates his additions, making it possible to see what was recorded about the village before 1800.
7. See the examples in *Towazugatari*, SNKBT 50: 180–82, 188–89; and Brazell, *The Confessions of Lady Nijō*, 192–94, 200–1.
8. The quotation is from the section of the gazetteer devoted to exiles; see Akiyama, (*Zōtei*) *Zushū shikō*, vol. 13, 17 verso. As the editors of *Nanzu fūdo shi* (1914), the first modern version of Nakako's story, confirm (648), the characters with which Michimura's name is written in (*Zōtei*) *Zushū shikō* are *ateji*.
9. "Kindai kyōiku no hajimari," in *Shizuoka-ken seishi kakei daijiten*, 161–62.
10. Suzuki, "Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun," 7–8.
11. Morikawa, "Genji hitobito kokoro kurabe," 35–36.
12. Or, as Sakomura, "Pictured Words and Codified Seasons," 18, argues, "the text may be read as a primer to the culture of *waka*." There is as yet no printed edition of the Suzuki MS of *Shijūni no mono arasoī*, from which the preceding and following examples are transcribed and translated. For a discussion of other MSS and a complete translation of one of them, see Sakomura, "Pictured Words and Codified Seasons," 179–272.
13. This and the following identifications are those passed down in the Kutta-Suzuki family.
14. Kanze Nobumitsu (1435?–1516). For a printed text, see "Haen," in *Nihon bungaku taikei*, 21:735–39.
15. Translated by Harper from the transcription in Morikawa, "Genji hitobito kokoro kurabe," 37, in Harper and Shirane, *Reading The Tale of Genji*.
16. Description and translation by Harper, "More Genji Gossip," 175–77, based on the transcription in Morikawa, "Genji hitobito kokoro kurabe," 39.
17. Translation from Harper, "More Genji Gossip," 176, slightly adapted. Cf. SNKBZ 25:356.
18. From the "Giō" episode of *Heike monogatari*, NKBZ 29:52–53.
19. The "magnificent hanging scroll" is listed as in the collection of the Kaizōji, Iruma, in Kabata, "Gon Naishi no Suke Nakako-hime," 11.
20. My brief account of GoYōzei's abdication is indebted to the detailed account in Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 190–97.
21. "Nanisama, gokōseki mo gofunbetsu mo fukashigi no tei nari," cited in DNS 12.6:956 and discussed in Imatani, *Buke to tennō*, 139–41.
22. The account in Kubo, *Kinsei no chōtei un'ei*, 39–43, focuses on the crucial diplomatic role played by GoYōzei's mother during the abdication crisis.
23. *Michimura nikki*, entry for Genna 3 (1617).8.26, cited in Kusaka, "Nakanoin Michimura nenpu kō: Chūnen-ki Genna 3–8 nen," 170.

24. Totman, *Early Modern Japan*, 53.
25. The following account of the three Azai sisters and their mother is based on Owada, *Sengoku san shimai*, a popular history by one of the foremost scholars of Japan's civil war (*sengoku*) era.
26. For a complete list of these regulations, see Kasaya, *Kinsei buke monjo no kenkyū*, 54–56. In English, detailed accounts of the genesis and import of *Kinchū narabi ni kuge shohatto* (Regulations for the Emperor and Nobility) may be found in Butler, “Tokugawa Ieyasu's Regulations for the Court”; and Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy*, 198–224.
27. See the entries for Genna 1 (1615).7.20, 7.29, and 8.2, in *Tokugawa jikki* 2, KST 39:59, 64, 69. Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki kenkyū*, 229–332, discusses Michimura, his world, and his 1615.7.20 lecture to Ieyasu in fascinating detail, and my brief description is indebted to her account.
28. Translation from Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 431.
29. *Kokinwakashū* no. 356; translation after Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 431 note 2.
30. *Nakanoin Michimura nikki*, entries for Genna 1 (1615).7.21 and 7.22, cited in Kusaka, “Nakanoin Michimura nenpu kō: Chūnen-ki (jō),” 26.
31. Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki kenkyū*, 236.
32. On continuing tensions between the court and the Tokugawa shogunate, see McMullen, “Courtier and Confucian,” esp. 3–11. On Ieyasu's “identification of mastery of texts with political power,” see Kornicki, “Books in the Service of Politics.”
33. Suzuki, “Nakanoin-ke no hitobito,” 96; and Miyakawa, *Genji monogatari no bunkashiteki kenkyū*, 253, both citing *Nakanoin Michimura nikki*, entries for Keichō 20 (1615).1.6 and 2.9.
34. Nakanoin Michihide (1428–94) was the last head of the family to have been appointed palace minister, in 1485. Michimura styled himself after this illustrious ancestor, adopting the style “Nochi no Jūrin'in” (the later Jūrin'in) after Michihide's style, Jūrin'in.
35. Nakaba, “Kansai Daigaku Toshokan zō *Genji monogatari* no honmon,” 158.
36. “Unprecedented” (*hakaku*) is Hashimoto Masanobu's assessment of both raises to the Nakanoin stipend, discussed in detail in his *Kinsei kuge shakai no kenkyū*, 461–67.
37. Michimura's poems are collected as *Nochi no Jūrin'in Daifu shū* in KT 9:86–117. The poems translated here are nos. 1582–83, KT 9:115. Kubo, *GoMizuno'o tennō*, 166, notes that Michimura's cycle of lectures to Konoe Sakiko spanned a period of more than two years, from 1621.2 through 1623.4.22.
38. *Michikatsu shū* no. 1340, KT 8:804. My thanks to Ueda Hiroshi for making the connection between this poem and Michimura's.
39. See the entries for Genna 8 (1622).11.17 in DNS 12.49:230–32 (Michimura departs Kyoto); Genna 8.12.13, DNS 12.50:131 (he is entertained in Edo Castle); and Genna 8.12.27, DNS 12.50:355–58 (he arrives back in Kyoto).
40. Translation from Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, 259.
41. SNKBZ 21:228; my translation.

42. *Nochi no Jūrin'in Daifu shū* nos. 1612–20, KT 9:116.
43. Date from Suzuki, “Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun,” 11.
44. *Kokushi daijiten*, s.v. “sha.”
45. For a detailed account of the two men’s ceremonial visits to the capital, see Kubo, *Tokugawa Masako*, 40–44.
46. “Feat of audacity” and the comparison with Hideyoshi’s assumption of the chancellorship are both from Bruschke-Johnson, *Dismissed as Elegant Fossils*, 136.
47. Nakako’s route has been reconstructed by Watanabe Morio and is described in his “Kyūdō o aruku,” 12; and “Futatabi kyūdō o aruku,” 10–11.
48. Date from *Shiryō sōran*, 16:55, citing two contemporary courtiers’ diaries, Hino Sukekatsu’s *Ryōgen’in no ki*, and Mibu Takasuke’s *Takasuke Sukune hinami no ki*. As of July 2012, the volume of DNS scheduled to contain documentary evidence of the former concubines’ reprieve and return to the capital remained unpublished. Unfortunately, the extracts from *Takasuke Sukune hinami no ki* printed in *Kaitei shiseki shūran*, 25:726–44, do not include any entries for Genna 9 (1623). Nor is any notice paid the women in the official record of Emperor GoMizuno’o’s life, *GoMizuno’o tennō jitsuroku*; or *Tokugawa jikki* entries for the sixth, seventh, eighth, intercalary eighth, and ninth months of 1623, KST 39:255–61, 299–306.
49. O-Yasu’s story is told in Suzuki, “Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun,” 11–13; and Watanabe, “Aoichi, Koyasu Jinja.” Granny Sada’s memories are quoted in the latter piece.
50. Suzuki, “Nakanoin Gon Naishi no Suke hairyū yobun,” 13.

## 8. SALVATION

1. Translation by Janine Beichman, from Kasanoin, *In Iris Fields*, 60.
2. Estimates of the population of Kyoto through the seventeenth century are discussed in Nishikawa and Moriya, “Kinsei toshi, Kyōto,” 22–25.
3. Or, as Lillehoj, *Art and Palace Politics*, 158, argues, “the [seventeenth-century] revival of Kyoto in substantial measure was sponsored by the Tokugawa, with the imperial family as its focus.”
4. Dates from *Kadokawa Nihonshi jiten*, 1287.
5. Michimura’s wife’s date of birth—1581, seven years earlier than Michimura’s in 1588—is my back calculation from her age, given as 83, in the Kanbun 3 (1663).11.8 notation of her death in *Tōke ryaku keizu*. According to “Hidekatsu no shijo,” the list of Hidekatsu’s children on the Web site of the Shibata Hanshi Kenkyūjo, <http://www.geocities.jp/dougakudou/page025.html> (accessed June 23, 2009), Hidekatsu’s daughter was married to a “Lord Asukai” before she became Michimura’s wife, but it has so far proved impossible to determine which member of the Asukai family this putative first husband might have been.
6. Emperor Meishō was succeeded by Emperor GoKōmyō (1633–54; r. 1643–54), who was the son of Assistant Chief Palace Attendant Sono Mitsuko (1602–56).

7. Kubo, *GoMizuno'o tennō*, 85–89.
8. It is true that the Tokugawa family tried once more to link itself to the imperial family when in 1630 they married Kame (1617–81), a granddaughter of Hidetada, to GoMizuno'o's younger brother Prince Yoshihito (1603–38). Their daughter, Princess Akiko (1638–80), was appointed consort to Emperor GoSai (1638–85; r. 1655–63), but her son by GoSai did not go on to become emperor himself; instead, he succeeded to the Katsuranomiya princely house.
9. See *Tokugawa jikki* 2, entry for Kan'ei 12 (1635).10.1, KST 39:691; and *Tokugawa jikki* 3, entry for Kan'ei 13 (1636).3.15, KST 40:5. I am indebted to Kissō, “Nakanoin Michimura no yūhei ni tsuite,” for drawing these passages to my attention. Michimura is similarly evasive in the poetic record of his travails contained in *Nakanoin Michimura kashū*, 2:306–7, headnotes to nos. 1647 and 1652. Several secondary sources say that Michimura and his son were detained in Edo for six years, not six months. Kissō convincingly demonstrates that six months (1635.3–10) is correct.
10. McMullen, *Idealism, Protest, and The Tale of Genji*, 293, note 39. I am also indebted to McMullen for directing me to the story from *Hagakure*, translated below.
11. Yamamoto, *Hagakure*, 530.
12. Dates of Shūhō's entering the Hōji'in (*nyūji*) and taking vows (*tokudo*) are from *Tōke ryaku keizu*.
13. For a brief overview of women's engagement with Buddhism in Japan, see Fister, “Japan's Imperial Buddhist Convents.”
14. Meeks, “In Her Likeness,” 378. For a more detailed discussion, focusing especially on the medieval period, see Meeks, “Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Life Cycle.”
15. The Hōji'in *Kakochō* lists Nakako's predecessor as the thirteenth abbess, Kakurin Shūshin, and gives her death date as Kan'ei 18 (1641).7.23. Oka, “Kinsei no bikuni gosho (ge),” 16, chart 1, lists Kakurin Shūshin as abbess of the Hōji'in in documents dated Genna 3 (1617) and Kan'ei 11 (1634).
16. Hino Teruko (1581–1607) and Nakako appear as colleagues of Nishinotōin Tokiyoshi's daughter Tokiko in *Tokiyoshi ki*, entry for Keichō 7 (1602).7.18, 2:239. Hino Sukekatsu (1577–1639) served as *buke tensō* from 1630.9.15 until his death on 1639.6.15. Dates from *Kadokawa Nihonshi jiten*, 1287.
17. Early connections between the Hōji'in and the Hino family are noted in Arakawa, “Keiaiji no enkaku,” 61. Several eighteenth-century gazetteers describe the Hōji'in living as controlled by the Hino: *Sanshū meiseki shi* (1704, rpt. 1711), cited in Noma, *Shinshū Kyōto sōsho*, 16:258; and *Shūi miyako meisho zue* (1787), in Ichiko and Suzuki, *Shintei Miyako meisho zue*, 4:45. *Tōke ryaku keizu* notes that Shūhō's introduction to the Hōji'in was arranged via adoption into the Hino family; Sukeshide (1650–87) is listed as her Hino adoptive father. Given that Nakako entered the convent in 1641, nine years before Sukeshide was born, this is obviously an error; Sukeshide's father, Hirotsuke (1617–87), seems a more likely candidate. The practice of adoption into the Hino family for a non-



Hino abbess continued into the nineteenth century: the entry for the Hōji'in in *Miyako nishiki* (1868), 2:14, describes Hōji'in Abbess Shūshun as "adopted daughter of the late Hino Sukenaru [1780–1846]; in reality the daughter of the late Toyama Mitsuyori [1807–50]."

18. "Sepulcher of stone" is from *The Testament of Saint Colette*, cited in Sobel, *Galileo's Daughter*, 82.
19. Conversation with Tanaka Ekō, then vice-superior, now abbess of the Hōkyōji Imperial Convent, Kyoto, October 29, 2000.
20. The traditional date of the founding of the Keiai-ji is 1285. Muge Nyodai (1223–98) is the nun more familiarly known as Mugai Nyodai. To the best of my knowledge, there is no textual evidence for preferring one pronunciation over the other: "Mugai" as a pronunciation of the characters of her name dates from the publication in 1990 of Barbara Ruch's essay "The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan"; however, Washio Junkyō gives "Muge" as the pronunciation for these two characters in his *Nihon bukke jinmei jisho*, published in 1903 (see the entries on 1100). The only monks with names pronounced Mugai use different characters (see the entries on 1099). It would seem, then, that Buddhist custom was to pronounce the characters used in Nyodai's religious name as Muge.
21. On this subject, see Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 57–89. Wuxue Zuyuan (1226–86) is also known in Japanese as Bukkō Kokushi, literally "national master of the Buddhist light," *kokushi* being a prestigious title he was granted by the Japanese court.
22. My account of the history of the Keiai-ji and its "daughter temples" (*shiin*) Daishō-ji, Hōkyō-ji, and Hōji'in is indebted to Arakawa, "Keiai-ji no enkaku," and Yanbe, "Mugai Nyodai no sōken jiin." On the history of the Hōkyō-ji, see Oka, "Kinsei no bikuni gosho (jō)" and "Kinsei no bikuni gosho (ge)." On the Hōji'in, there are also several encyclopedia entries, the most detailed of which are the identical articles in *Kyōto-shi no chimei*, 571, and *Kyōto, Yamashiro jiin jinja daijiten*, 613–14. In English, see *A Hidden Heritage*, 60–61, 357 (Hōji'in), 65–66, 358–59 (Daishō-ji), and 74–75, 361–62 (Hōkyō-ji).
23. Ruch, "The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan," 503. A photograph of the statue is reproduced on the same page. See also the replica in *A Hidden Heritage*, 55.
24. On Lanxi Daolong (1213–78), see Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 65–68; and Collcutt, "Lanxi Daolong at Kenchō-ji."
25. Conversation with Shibata Shōrei, Kyoto, November 19, 2000. "To cast off one's womanhood" translates *josei o suteru koto*; "harder" translates *motto katai*; "more masculine" translates *motto otokorashii*.
26. Fister, "Japan's Imperial Buddhist Convents," 28.
27. See the biography of Abbess Mumu Jishō in *A Hidden Heritage*, 67–70; a short history of the Honkōin Imperial Convent is found on 359–60.
28. This is Koida Tomoko's point, in her *Hotoke to onna no Muromachi*, 387–88.
29. Information on the education of girls at imperial convents is from Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 55–59. In English, see *A Hidden Heritage*, 224–28, 249–51.



30. *King Lear* 5.3.274–275. On nuns’ “vocal deportment” (*kotoba no shitsuke*), see Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 73–75.
31. The daily routine of the abbess of the Daishōji, as described in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 73.
32. On the distinction between choir nuns (*monache da coro*) and lay sisters (*converse*) in Venetian convents, for example, see Laven, *Virgins of Venice*, 8–10, 50–51, 123–24.
33. Hakuin’s letter is summarized in Yoshizawa, “Hakuin Zenshi kana hōgo.” My thanks to Patricia Fister for directing me to this article.
34. Kasanoin, *In Iris Fields*, 35.
35. Regular note of these services, known as *shukushin*, can be found in *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for Jōō 2 (1653).6.1 through Jōō 3 (1654).6.30, transcribed and annotated in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 299–417. On the *Hōkyōji nikki*, see below.
36. Wakita, *Nihon chūsei joseishi*, 212; Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, 143.
37. The exact amount of the temple’s *jiryō* is provided in *Nihon meisatsu daijiten*, s.v. Hōji’in.
38. Oka, “Kinsei no bikuni gosho (jō),” 40–43. On the fate of imperial convents in the Meiji period, see Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 6–7, 21–22; Arakawa, “Bikuni gosho,” 24, 30 note 33; and in English, Cogan, “Time Capsules for Tradition.”
39. This is the assertion made in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 288, 293. According to Atsuta, *Amamonzeki jiin komonjo mokuroku*, 18–19, years for which the *Daishōji nikki* is extant are: 1660, 1719–20, 1722, 1724, 1797–1804, and 1845–47, a total of 16 years. I have not been able to reconcile these conflicting accounts. *Daishōji nikki* entries for the year Manji 3 (1660) first month and twelfth month are printed in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 443–61.
40. *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for the year Jōō 2 (1653).6.1 through Jōō 3 (1654).6.30, as well as Manji 3 (1660).1.1–29 and 1660.6.1–29, are printed in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 299–442. A few days are missing: 1653.11.3–9, 1653.12.28–30, 1654.1.3–18, 1654.6.9–14, and 1654.6.20–25.
41. *Hōkyōji nikki*, entry for Jōō 2 (1653).6.15, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 310. Throughout, I assume that the expression “Hōji’in-dono” refers to the then abbess of the Hōji’in, but who she might have been, no one, not even Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, whose annotations in *Amamonzeki* are otherwise so helpful, seems to know.
42. See the entries in *Hōkyōji nikki* for Jōō 2 (1653).6.27 (“Shūhō Hōji’in ni kyō mo tōryū. Hōji’in-dono yori fumi mairu”); and 12.11 (“Shūhō Hōji’in yori oide, sunawachi okaeri”) and similar entries on 12.16, 12.18, 12.21, and 12.26 in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 320, 368–72.
43. *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for Jōō 3 (1654).2.8–18, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 383–85. The lectures (*kōshaku*) were on the *Dankyō* and the *Yuikyōgyō*.
44. Itakura Suō-no-Kami Shigemune (1586–1656), son of Itakura Iga-no-Kami

- Katsushige, was Kyoto Shogunal Deputy from 1620 until 1654. *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for Jōō 2 (1653).7.12 and Jōō 3 (1654).6.5 record the sending of quantities of dried pickled gourd (*hoshiuri*) to him; see Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 327, 413.
45. A typical entry reads: “Ongyōzui mairu. Minamina mizufuro ari.” See, for example, the entries in *Hōkyōji nikki* for Jōō 2 (1653).9.22, 10.22, and 10.30, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 346, 355, 358. One hopes that the occasional failure to mention “cold water baths for everyone” (e.g., 9.11, 10.8, pp. 343, 351) does not mean they went without. On baths and bathing generally in this period, see Butler, “Washing Off the Dust.”
  46. See, for example, the entries in *Hōkyōji nikki* for Jōō 2 (1653).7.27, 9.27, and 11.28 in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 331, 348, 363.
  47. *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for Jōō 2 (1653).11.27, 28 in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 363.
  48. *Hōkyōji nikki* entries for Jōō 3 (1654).3.24, 3.29, and 4.8 in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 394, 395, 397.
  49. Fister, “Faith in the Bodhisattva Kannon,” 167.
  50. *Hōkyōji nikki* entry for Manji 3 (1660).6.26, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 440.
  51. According to the Hōji’in *Kakochō*, Shūho died on Kanbun 11 (1671).6.27; her successor Shūtoku died on Kanbun 8 (1668).3.9; and Shūtoku’s successor Shūchō died on Kanbun 9 (1669).2.6.
  52. Conversation with Oka Yoshiko, Kyoto, March 11, 2001.
  53. Information about Shūsei’s mother (an *ie nyōbō*) and the dates Shūsei entered the Hōji’in and took vows are from *Tōke ryaku keizu*. The Hōji’in *Kakochō* gives Shūsei’s date of death as Kyōhō 10 (1725).1.13; *Tōke ryaku keizu* differs by one day, giving 1725.1.12.
  54. Shūhō’s visit to the Rozanji, where the Nakanojin family grave was located, on 1653.6.29, four months after her elder brother’s death, is noted in the *Hōkyōji nikki* entry for Jōō 2 (1653).6.29, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 321.
  55. Undated letter from Mikushige (Kushige Takako, known posthumously as Hōshunmon’in, 1604–85) to “wet nurse Acha and entourage,” in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 477. Etiquette required the lower-ranking Mikushige not to address her daughter Abbess Rishō (1631–56) directly, but to send letters via a close intermediary; Acha was presumably the abbess’s former wet nurse. “The senior nun of the Hōji’in” translates “Hōji’in-dono seijisha”; another possible interpretation is “the abbess *and* the senior nun of the Hōji’in.” The reference here to Michimura’s death the previous day enables us to date this letter to Jōō 2 (1653).3.1.
  56. Undated letter from Mikushige to “senior nun and entourage,” Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeki*, 487–88. The senior nun (*seijisha*) in this case is a close attendant of Abbess Rishō.
  57. Cited in the entry for Nakanojin Michimura in Nojima, *Kugyō jinmei daijiten*,

554. The poem does not appear in either the KT or the Kōten Bunko editions of Michimura's poetry collections.
58. See the undated letter from Mikushige to the "senior nun" in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeiki*, 481, in which she recommends that her daughter wear red underkimono as a prophylactic measure.
  59. *Hōkyōji nikki* entry for Jōō 2 (1653).6.17, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeiki*, 312.
  60. See items 13, 14, and 15 in *Nihon shōzōga zuroku*, 7, 23–24, 96–97.
  61. All dates from the Nakanoin genealogy *Tōke ryaku keizu*. Michimura's daughter, known posthumously as Chitokuin, was married to Seikanji Tomotsuna (1612–75). Entries in the *Hōkyōji nikki* recording their gifts and/or visits include Jōō 2 (1653).8.14, 10.1, 10.13, and 10.26, in Inokuchi, Horii, and Nakai, *Amamonzeiki*, 336, 348, 353, 356–57.
  62. The shape of Nakako's gravestone is known as *muhōtō* or *rantō*. *Muhō* means seamless and describes the perfection of heavenly garments that have no need of stitching. The *muhō* gravestone is thus one without a join, perhaps intended to symbolize the enlightenment achieved by the deceased? The entry for *rantō* in *Kokushi daijiten*, 14:511, notes that the shape has its origins in China and is recorded from the Tang period on. It was transmitted to Japan along with Zen practices and is commonly used to mark the graves of Zen religious.
  63. On the "Great Kyoto Fire of 1788" (Tenmei no Kyōto taika), see the entry in *Kokushi daijiten*, 9:1032, and Ponsonby-Fane, *Kyoto*, 406–8.
  64. On the vicissitudes of the Hōji'in in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Nishikawa and Oyaizu, *Hōryū Sensei genkōroku*, 2–26. The description of the temple's derelict state is from 5.
  65. The entry on the Hōji'in in the early eighteenth-century gazetteer *Sanshū meiseki shi* (1704; rpt. 1711) notes: "In recent years, the custom in the capital, in emulation of the forty-eight vows of Amida, is to make a pilgrimage to the forty-eight sacred places of Amida. The present temple is one of these [places]." Cited in Noma, *Shinshū Kyōto sōsho*, 16:258.

## EPILOGUE

1. *Tōke den*.
2. The quotation is from Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 694.
3. For a fascinating account of how—and why—the Reizei family managed to survive the modern era, see Carter, *Householders*, chapters 9 and 10.
4. Lebra, *Above the Clouds*, 258.
5. Tsunoda, *Nihon no kōkyū*, 350.
6. The two texts referred to here are *Amida Nyorai konpon darani* and *Sharirai*, respectively. The Chinese translations of both are traditionally attributed to the Indian monk Amoghavajra (Jp. Fukū; 705–774).

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Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove any thing.

—JANE AUSTEN, *PERSUASION*

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