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***Izumi Shikibu nikki* in Manga: Recreating Classical Poetry, Letters, and Shared Sensibilities**

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Introduction

Classical literary works are often transformed into comics, or manga, in Japan to extend readers' understanding of the past. *Izumi Shikibu nikki* 和泉式部日記 (The Izumi Shikibu diary, early eleventh century) completed in the Heian period 平安時代 (794–1185) is one such text. Several of the comic-book adaptations of the work have been published as educational manga (*gakushū manga* 学習漫画). Depending on the manga artist's style and interpretation, these adaptations include visually and textually different parts of a work, thus leading to diverse representations of classical literature.¹ Even when educational manga follow closely the content of a classical text, the outcome is a work with its own character and individuality.

In this article, I will compare two manga adaptations of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* and consider how each presents the eleventh-century text to readers. Focusing on three aspects of the diary, specifically Japanese poetry (*waka* 和歌, thirty-one syllable poems), letters, and acts of gazing out (*nagame* ながめ) and brooding (*mono-omoi* もの思ひ), I will analyze specific scenes to examine the differences between the eleventh-century text and contemporary adaptations and explore manga's functions, potential, and limitations. These aspects recur throughout the Heian-period diary and are commonly viewed as its main characteristics. They provide important insights into women's lives and culture in eleventh-century Japan, which differed tremendously from those of the present day.

To understand the functions of poetry, letter exchanges, and the acts of gazing and brooding, one needs imagination that transcends time and space. I argue that the two manga adaptations that I will be discussing have successfully captured the characteristics of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* generally



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accepted in contemporary scholarly circles and have convincingly conveyed the mutually shared sensibility between the main characters. These modern interpretations shed light on aspects of the Heian-period work perceived as timeless and essential and on the significance of classical literature in present-day Japan. I focus on these two recent works because among the many manga adaptations, only they recreate the eleventh-century diary in its entirety.

Izumi Shikibu nikki was written by the accomplished woman poet Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部 (c. 978–1027?) and describes ten months in the romantic relationship between the author and Prince Atsumichi 敦道親王 (Sochi no Miya Atsumichi Shinnō 帥宮, 981–1007).² The diary documents a budding relationship, the break-up of the Prince’s marriage, and Izumi Shikibu’s move into his home. Their relationship begins when Atsumichi sends a letter to Izumi Shikibu who yearns for her beloved Prince Tametaka 為尊親王 (Danjō no Miya Tametaka Shinnō 彈正宮, 977–1002) after his death. Tametaka is Atsumichi’s older brother. *Izumi Shikibu nikki* contains many poems that serve to document the conversations between Izumi Shikibu and Atsumichi, or “the woman” and “the Prince” as they are referred to in the diary. Poems occupy a central position in the story and have made the work representative of Heian literature.³

The first manga adaptation I examine is titled *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki* マンガ和泉式部日記 (The diary of Izumi Shikibu manga) published by Heibonsha 平凡社 in 1990.⁴ It was supervised by the Heian literature specialist Professor Shimizu Yoshiko 清水好子, adapted by Tanaka Miho 田中美穂, and illustrated by Kosakabe Yōko 小坂部陽子. The second adaptation titled *Izumi Shikibu nikki* 和泉式部日記 (The Izumi Shikibu diary) appeared in the Chūō kōron shinsha 中央公論新社 series *Manga Nihon no koten* マンガ日本の古典 (Manga Japanese classics).⁵ This work by manga artist Igarashi Yumiko いがらしゆみこ came out in 1997 and was released in paperback two years later. Because of its popularity, by August 2019 it had been reprinted twelve times. The two adaptations are educational and relatively faithful to the eleventh-century diary, and as such, serve as useful case studies to examine how important aspects of Heian-period culture are made accessible to modern readers via the popular medium of manga.

Poetry: The Opening Episode of *Izumi Shikibu nikki*

The aesthetic qualities of Japanese poetry and its composition are best conveyed in the opening of *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, which projects the easy

tension and emotions shared between people during poetic exchange that eventually lead to the development of a love relationship. The poignant scene features Izumi Shikibu in mourning for the late Prince Tametaka and the arrival of his servant boy. The emotional charge of the episode comes from the exchange of poems that contain vivid imagery describing natural scenery and that allude to an ancient poem. The work opens as follows:

When Prince Tametaka died, love ended more quickly than dreams. The woman lived in mourning day and night. After the tenth day of the Fourth Month or so, the shades under the trees grew thicker and the grass on the earthen wall became greener. Thinking how beautiful these changes—unnoticed by others—were, as she was brooding, she saw a person behind the garden fence, and she noticed he was the boy who had served Prince Tametaka.⁶

The passage depicts a woman (the protagonist, or Izumi Shikibu) gazing alone at the beautiful lights and shadows of an early summer day. Such portrayal of natural scenery through the protagonist's gaze is the focus of the work.⁷ The servant boy brings a blooming branch of a mandarin orange tree (*tachibana* 橘) from Prince Atsumichi, who has asked the boy to notice how the woman reacts upon receiving the branch. The woman immediately recites a phrase from an old poem stating, “of someone long ago” (*mukashi no hito no* 昔の人), thereby revealing that she understands the poetic reference that the branch was meant to represent.⁸ The poem that the woman references appears in *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (A collection of poems ancient and modern, ca. 905) and was widely popular at the time. It reads:

<i>satsuki matsu</i>	Waiting for the Fifth Month to bloom
<i>hana tachibana no</i>	the mandarin orange tree,
<i>ka o kageba</i>	when I breathe its fragrance,
<i>mukashi no hito no</i>	I am reminded of the scent of the sleeves
<i>sode no ka zo suru</i> ⁹	of someone long ago.

Instead of a written message, Prince Atsumichi sends just one *tachibana* branch, likening it to his late brother, and is curious about the woman's reaction. This scene is imbued with tension: Prince Atsumichi wishes to mourn his brother's passing together with the woman and is curious to find out what kind of a woman his brother was in love with; at the same time, understanding his intention, the woman sends an exquisite poem wondering if the Prince resembles his brother. Both are nervous realizing that this exchange could give rise to a special relationship. Indeed, the

exchange of poems leads to an elegant romance.

The woman replies with the following poem:

<i>kaoru ka ni</i>	Rather than comparing
<i>yosouru yori wa</i>	the fragrances,
<i>hototogisu</i>	I want to hear the cuckoo
<i>kikabaya onaji</i>	and find out if
<i>koe ya shitaru to</i> ¹⁰	its voice is the same.

The poem implies that instead of comparing scents and thus using the *tachibana* blossoms to bring back memories of a deceased person, she prefers to hear the voice of the cuckoo (*hototogisu* ほととぎす), or the Prince, wondering if it sounds the same as his brother's. The cuckoo is another symbol of early summer and people eagerly awaited to hear its voice. The woman's reply is exquisitely based on the *Kokin wakashū* poem to which the blooming branch initially alluded, and her reply reveals her own poetic talent. Readers unfamiliar with Japanese poetry, however, would not understand the significance of this poetic exchange. Let us see how the manga versions approach this scene.

Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga shows a blooming *tachibana* branch next to the old poem "Waiting for the Fifth Month" (*satsuki matsu* 五月待つ) inscribed in its entirety in a panel (Fig. 1).¹¹ They provide the same *Kokin wakashū* poem to facilitate readers' comprehension of the scene. In addition, the image of Prince Tametaka appears next to the woman's words *mukashi no hito no* ("of someone of long ago"). The images of the *tachibana* branch and Prince Tametaka here serve as visual annotations of the poem. They function as present-day substitutes for advanced knowledge used in classical Japanese literature (and specifically in Japanese poetry) which is difficult for modern readers to understand and appreciate. This knowledge of old poems refers to the construction of mental images using a limited number of syllables or words. In this scene from the eleventh-century work, for example, by intoning only seven syllables—*mukashi no hito no*—the protagonist shows that she has guessed the allusion to the *Kokin wakashū* poem. The producers of the manga version highlight the importance of the old poem in this poetic exchange through the images of the *tachibana* branch and the late prince and the layout of the panel. By utilizing the vertical textual orientation typical for manga, and the arrangement of panels from right to left, they introduce ancient poems to readers in a way reminiscent of classical literature.



Figure 1. Izumi Shikibu recalls Prince Tametaka when she sees the tachibana branch (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 30. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

Kosakabe and Tanaka’s manga features Prince Atsumichi’s words that praise the woman’s poem, which are not found in the eleventh-century diary, namely “It’s a wonderful reply; she immediately understood the meaning of the mandarin orange. That’s why my brother praised her poetic talent.”¹² This comment, along with the close-up of the Prince, highlights the importance of this poem in the correspondence between the two (Figs. 2, 3).



Figure 2. Prince Atsumichi reads Izumi Shikibu’s poem (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 34. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

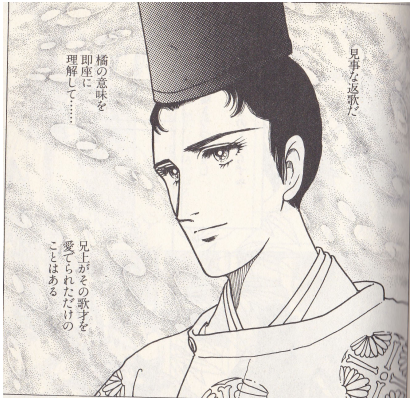


Figure 3. The Prince is impressed with the woman's poem (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 35. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

In a similar way, Igarashi's manga portrays a blooming *tachibana* branch and includes the woman's words "of someone of long ago."¹³ The ancient poem appears in small font at the bottom of the page along with an explanation stating that it comes from *Kokin wakashū* and was composed by an anonymous poet (Fig. 4). Like Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga, this one also includes the Japanese poem, but its positioning on the bottom of the page in a footnote makes the scene easier for modern readers to grasp without pausing to read the poem.

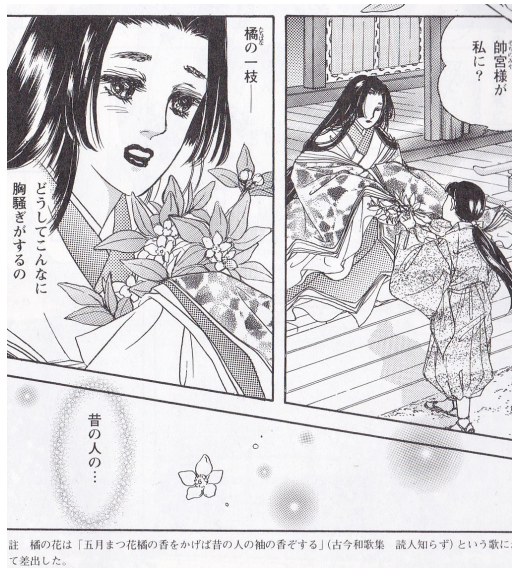


Figure 4. Izumi Shikibu is delivered a blooming *tachibana* branch (Igarashi, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1999), 26. Courtesy of Chūō kōron shinsha.

Igarashi's manga also includes Prince Atsumichi's line, "She figured it out! Izumi Shikibu is not only beautiful but also well-educated."¹⁴ Like Kosakabe and Tanaka's work, this line does not appear in *Izumi Shikibu nikki*. Heian-period readers would have been familiar with the poem and immediately known the significance of the woman's response, namely its implication and the woman's aptitude to understand it on the spot. Thus, this adaptation, too, offers readers tools to comprehend the function of the poetic exchange in this scene. The illustration of this ancient poem is vastly different in Kosakabe and Tanaka's adaptation from the illustration in Igarashi's adaptation. Kosakabe and Tanaka's work draws attention to the poem by including it in its entirety (in classical Japanese) inside a box, as depicted in Figure 1. In Igarashi's adaptation, on the other hand, the poem appears translated into modern Japanese and is placed at the bottom of the page. In fact, throughout Igarashi's work, very few poems are cited fully. Instead, their content is expressed through images rather than text, which is a creative way of introducing the world of poetry to the general audience. This approach positions the storytelling method of Igarashi's version closer to modern manga than Kosakabe and Tanaka's work.

As a record of a woman's personal experience and internal thoughts, *Izumi Shikibu nikki* is commonly viewed as a woman's memoir (*nikki* 日記). The centrality of poetry, however, has led many scholars to describe it as *uta monogatari* 歌物語 (poem tale). In the Edo period, for example, the work was published multiple times under the title *Izumi Shikibu monogatari* 和泉式部物語, or *The Tale of Izumi Shikibu*. Undoubtedly, the woman poet has made full use of her poetic talent in her work. Japanese poetry offers multi-layered expressions drawing from a multitude of earlier poems, nature-related imagery, and association with the human world. The woman's reply, based on the old poem "Waiting for the Fifth Month," is a case in point. Suggesting reconnection with the deceased through the five senses, including smell and hearing, and getting to know Prince Atsumichi, is a common poetic expression in classical literature that combines multiple layers of meanings. Both manga adaptations present the depth of poetry in their own ways. Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga preserves the poem and includes it written in classical Japanese, while Igarashi's work relays the content of the poem by visualizing it. The former emphasizes the original text of the poem, and the latter prioritizes modern readers. Though different, these approaches stress the important role that poetry plays in *Izumi Shikibu nikki*. To the manga artists, the challenging task of portraying the world of ancient poetry offers an opportunity to display their skills and talent.

Letters: Episode “Worship at Ishiyama-dera”

Another unique aspect of Japanese classical literature is the exchange of letters. In the Heian period, marriage was different from what it is today, as love progressed mainly through exchanges of letters and poems, and women waited in their homes for men to visit them. A man would visit a woman to enjoy romantic trysts multiple times and would eventually marry her. This is known as *tsumadoikon* 妻問婚 (wife-visiting marriage).¹⁵ In this arrangement, women relied heavily on heartfelt letters from men before marriage took place. *Izumi Shikibu nikki* abounds in exchanges of letters between Izumi Shikibu and Prince Atsumichi and illustrates the tremulous emotions of the waiting woman in fine detail. Letters that arrived promptly touched a woman’s heart, while their absence on days when she expected them created inner turmoil. In modern times, more specifically since the advent of readily available cellphones and text messaging, the progress of romance through correspondence, and even the practice of measuring the depths of one’s heart through letters, has almost disappeared. This creates an obstacle for readers today to comprehend the culture of exchanging letters. However, understanding how the exchange of letters reflected the level of intimacy between lovers is indispensable to comprehend courting in the Heian period.

The episode “Worship at Ishiyama-dera” (*Ishiyama-dera mōde* 石山寺詣), found in the middle of the diary, effectively conveys the importance of exchanging letters in the Heian period. Because the characters exchange letters all the time—when they both live in the capital and when they travel—letters function as an important tool for communicating their emotions to each other. Naturally, the greater the distance between them, the more intense their feelings grow through the exchange of letters. In the episode “Worship at Ishiyama-dera,” the woman is on a pilgrimage to Ishiyama-dera and the Prince stays in the capital and they continue to communicate through letters. Associated with the Shingon sect 真言宗 of Buddhism, Ishiyama-dera is a temple situated in the vicinity of Lake Biwa 琵琶湖.¹⁶ The temple is the thirteenth holy site on the pilgrimage of thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon 観音, the bodhisattva of compassion, in western Japan 西国三十三所観音霊場 and has attracted devotees since ancient times. It appears in many poems and classical literary works, which feature characters making pilgrimages to the temple. Ishiyama-dera is located at approximately fifteen kilometers east of Kyoto 京都 with Mt. Ōsaka 逢坂山 lying between the two. Mt. Ōsaka was the site of Ōsaka Barrier (Ōsaka no seki 逢坂の関), and pilgrims had to travel through this

barrier mountain to get to Ishiyama-dera. The belief in the miraculous efficacy of Kannon, the temple's proximity to the capital, and the scenic road made Ishiyama-dera a popular site of pilgrimage.¹⁷

According to *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, the woman secludes herself at Ishiyama-dera for about a week in the Eighth Month, which is early fall. She keeps reflecting on her loneliness and worries about her relationship with the Prince. Although she tries to worship Kannon, she cannot devote herself to prayer, being distracted by thoughts about the Prince in Kyoto. Just at that moment, the servant boy arrives with a letter from the Prince, and what follows is a repeated exchange of letters between the two. Thus, the servant boy must cross the mountain three times in order to deliver the letters, and even when he is exhausted, the Prince's words "Though you are tired, you must go again" urge him to make yet another journey.¹⁸ This episode is very emotionally powerful and can be understood only when one is familiar with the significance of exchanging multiple messages over great distance at this point of history.

The woman's reaction in the diary is described as follows: "Delighted and because the servant boy had come to such an unexpected place, the woman called out 'What happened?' The boy held out a letter from the Prince. She opened it and read it faster than usual."¹⁹ The passage reveals the woman's agitation when she opens the unexpected letter and continues to describe her delight that the Prince has written to her despite the distance between them and speculates on the depth of his feelings for her.

Pilgrimages to Ishiyama-dera by aristocratic women are also described in *Kagerō nikki* 蜻蛉日記 (The Kagerō diary, tenth century) and *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記 (The Sarashina diary, eleventh century).²⁰ The woman featured in *Kagerō nikki* leaves the capital at dawn riding in an oxcart, has lunch at Mt. Ōsaka, boards a boat at Uchide Beach 打出浜, and arrives at Ishiyama-dera around early evening. On the way back, she leaves the temple well before dawn and arrives in the capital around mid-morning.²¹ Unlike this woman pilgrim riding in an oxcart, the servant boy in *Izumi Shikibu nikki* travels on foot, and readers can only imagine how arduous his journey was. However, delivering a letter in a timely manner was essential as it served as evidence of lovers' devotion to one another. How do manga adaptations present this exchange of letters and the long distance between the capital and Ishiyama-dera?

Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga contains a one-page map of the area and a caption stating, "People left Kyoto early in the morning by oxcart and arrived at Ishiyama-dera in the evening, it is said" (Fig. 5).²² In

addition, the servant boy's trips back and forth are represented by the boy's figure running to the right and left between the woman and the Prince, thus delivering letters to the lovers who are far away from each other (Fig. 6).²³ The boy is carrying a tree branch with a letter tied to it, as it was a common practice in the Heian period to attach love letters to flowers and tree branches.

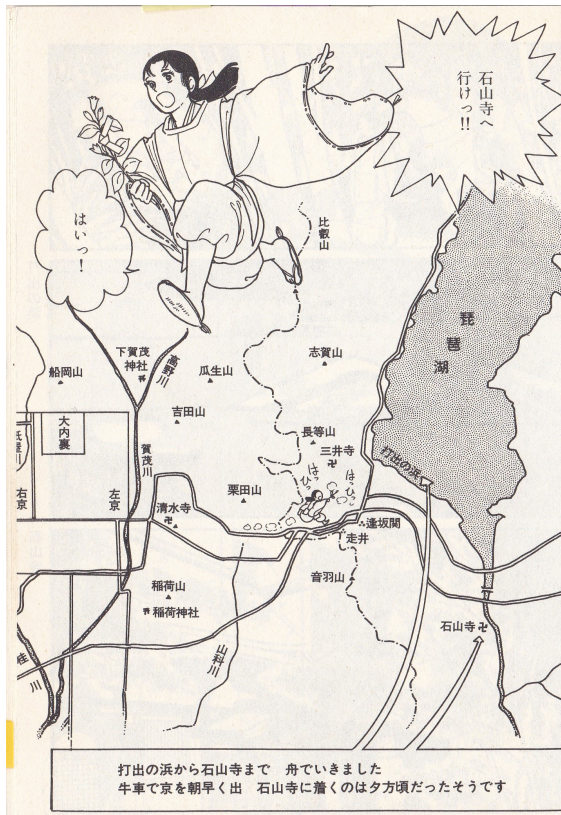


Figure 5. Map to Ishiyama-dera temple (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 167. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

There are many similar scenes illustrating the servant boy carrying a letter when the Prince and the woman are in the capital (Fig.7).²⁴ Like in the scene when the woman is staying in Ishiyama-dera, the boy with the postal logo 卍 on his chest runs with all his might. This humorous approach points to the culture surrounding exchanges of letters and the importance of their timely delivery in the Heian period.

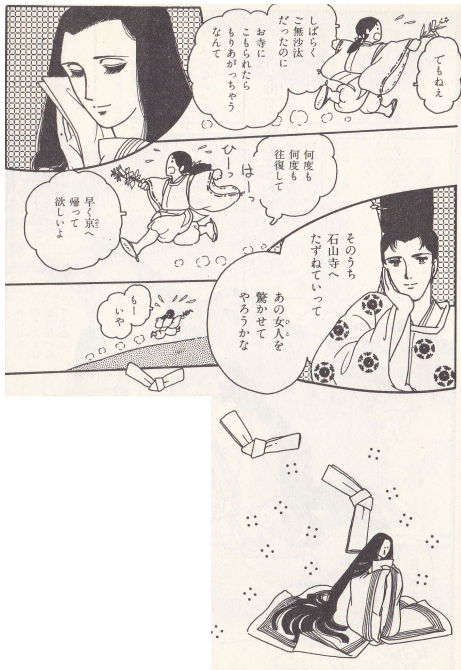
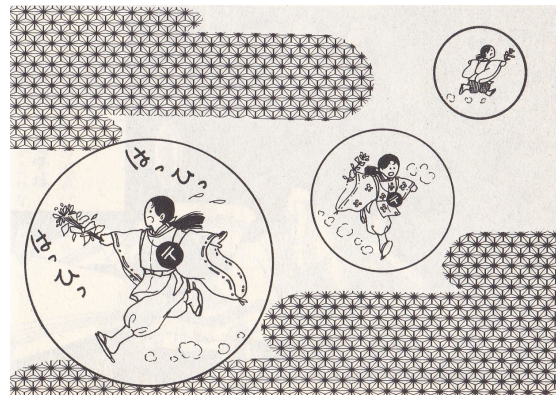


Figure 6. A boy delivers a letter between the capital and Ishiyama-dera (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 171. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

Figure 7. A boy delivers a letter between Izumi Shikibu and Prince Atsumichi with the Japanese postal mark on his robe (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 42. Courtesy of Heibonsha.



The scene featuring a servant boy who travels between Ishiyama-dera and Kyoto is included in Igarashi's manga as well (Figs. 8, 9).²⁵ To convey a sense of the distance between Kyoto and the temple, as well as the

importance of the timely delivery of letters to modern readers, this manga adaptation depicts the boy sweating as he runs along the mountain ridge. This present-day version acknowledges the importance of the boy in the eleventh-century diary and highlights his dedication to serve his master by portraying him as a cute character. Quick-witted and loyal servants like him were essential in relationships between men and women.



Figure 8. A boy delivers letters between the capital and Ishiyama-dera (Igarashi, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1999), 149. Courtesy of Chūō kōron shinsha.

Although the episode about the Ishiyama-dera pilgrimage in the diary does not describe the natural scenery in much detail, both manga adaptations include landscape scenes from the surroundings of the temple and on the way to it. Regardless of their absence in the classical text, in the manga versions, these images allow readers to understand the setting at only a glance.²⁶

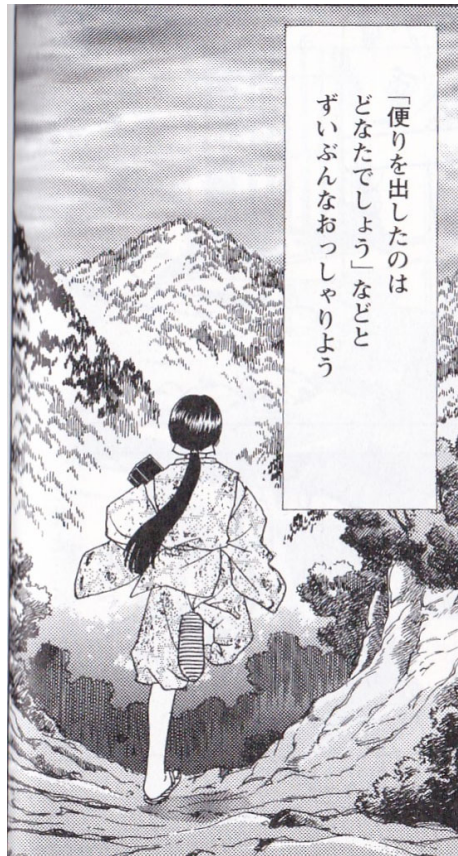


Figure 9. A boy delivers letters between the capital and Ishiyama-dera (Igarashi, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1999), 150. Courtesy of Chūō kōron shinsha.

Gazing out, Sunk in Brooding Thoughts: Rain, the Moon, and the “Same Heart”

Heian women’s diaries abound in scenes that depict a woman gazing out at a garden while waiting for a man to visit her. Because of the courtship and marriage customs at the time, the “waiting” figure was always a woman. The trope of the “waiting woman” (*matsu onna* 待つ女) thus frequently appears in Heian literature. A scene of waiting usually features a woman thinking of one specific man; her heart is in great turmoil and she gazes out blankly (*nagame* ながめ) at the garden of her house. This act of waiting is frequently depicted in women’s diaries and Japanese poetry. Among women’s memoirs, *Izumi Shikibu nikki* stands out for its large number of scenes of gazing out in tedious longing. The act of gazing out blankly reveals the character’s attempt to speculate on her lover’s feelings

and to reflect intently on her own emotions. Gazing at the falling rain, or gazing at the beautiful moon, a woman wishes deeply that her man would feel the same way.

“Same heart” or “similar disposition” (*onaji kokoro* 同じ心) as an expression and theme permeate classical literature. Because of the difficulty of having the same disposition as another, the distance between lovers shrinks whenever they realize that they share affection and poetic sensibility. The expression “same heart” appears five times in the diary and is always associated with gazing out. Each example reveals deep feelings shared between the woman and the Prince. This abstract idea of gazing out as revealing the mutually shared sensibilities between lovers, however, is not readily transposable into the manga medium. An examination of how this aspect of Heian literature is represented in manga offers insights into manga artists’ creative methods.

Rain

The eleventh-century diary contains a scene that features the woman gazing out, sunk in brooding thoughts shortly after the Prince’s first visit. It takes place during days of incessant rain in the Fifth Month. A poem from the Prince arrives and leads to an exchange of more poems. It is a scene that features two people writing to each other and musing about this sorrowful world (*ukiyo* うき世), illustrating how both shared the same feelings. This is an important scene in which the similar dispositions, both feeling lonely and melancholic (as suggested by the long summer rain), shortens the distance between the lovers through poems and letters.

In Kosakabe and Tanaka’s work, this scene is depicted in great detail over seven pages featuring rainy days, thus emphasizing the woman’s tangled emotions (Figs. 10, 11).²⁷ Unlike the eleventh-century *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, which describes the heroine’s feelings in detail and only reveals the Prince’s feelings through poems and brief sentences, this adaptation offers readers a bird’s eye view of how the emotions of the Prince and the woman intersect by illustrating their thoughts in a similar way. It would be difficult, in one or two panels, to express visually the woman’s brooding thoughts and the bitter tedium (*tsurezure* つれづれ) she endures during the long, incessant rain. The phrase *tsurezure* is sensually distant to modern readers but it is a unique element of Heian women’s literature. It is often associated with the word *nagame* (gazing out) and refers to the state of being lost in thought.²⁸ It appears sixteen times within *Izumi Shikibu nikki*.

On the other hand, Igarashi’s manga has omitted this scene completely

and moved on directly to the next rainy scene that features the flooding of the Kamo River 鴨川. One reason for the absence of the scene here is the difficulty to visually depict an exchange of feelings through *waka*. Igarashi's work rarely includes the classical text of the poem in a picture frame. Unlike Kosakabe and Tanaka, who have centered their work on Japanese poetry and have therefore devoted many pages on *waka*, Igarashi has connected the scenes of long rain before and after the exchange of poems, leaving out that episode.



Figure 10. The Prince gazes out on a rainy day (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu Nikki*, 1990), 108. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

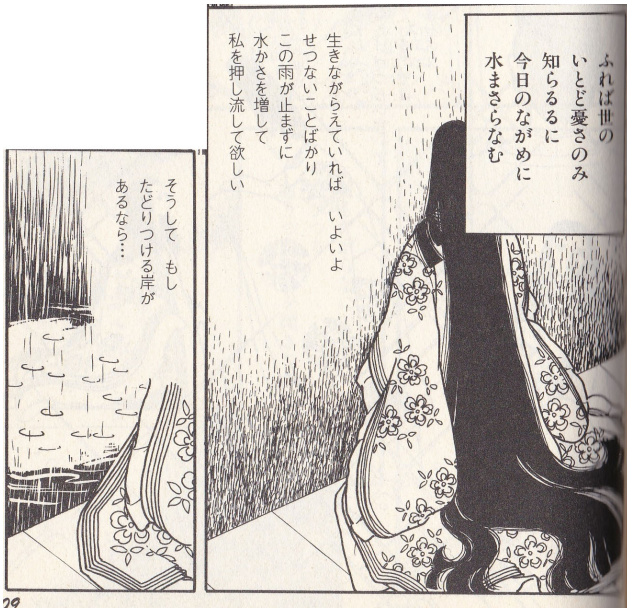


Figure 11. The woman gazes out on a rainy day (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 109. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

The Moon

Toward the middle of the eleventh-century diary, there is a scene about the moon after the twentieth day of the Ninth Month. Here, the woman is gazing at the moon, rather than the rain, and her melancholic mood intensifies.²⁹ According to the diary, “forlorn and looking more pitiful than usual, the woman was gazing” at the moon, spending the night alone, and eventually jotting down her thoughts about the elegance of the moonlit night.³⁰ By the lunar calendar, the moon on the twentieth day of the Ninth Month remains in the sky until dawn. Meanwhile, the Prince, too, spends the night alone and sends a letter to her, but she does not notice the servant boy arriving with it. At dawn, she sends her thoughts inspired by the moon: a delicate description of the moonlight, the sound of bells, the birdsong, and the sky. The act of gazing upon nature portrays the woman’s mental landscape. While this description of the natural scenery, combining *waka* and prose, is the most elegant passage in the diary, it is difficult to portray in manga.

Kosakabe and Tanaka’s work depicts many scenes of nature and adds the following lines from the Prince, “The woman has vividly and continuously depicted the autumn sky, mountains, and fields. This talent precisely is her great charm” (Figs. 12, 13).³¹



Figure 12. A letter sent by the woman describes the moonlit night (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 182. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

On the other hand, Igarashi’s manga depicts a scene of a moonlit night and portrays the woman engaged in writing. The figure of the Prince is also present as he reads and writes responses (Fig. 14).³² The poems that the woman and the Prince exchange are drawn vertically, thus showing their correspondence with each other. In the eleventh-century work, this episode features five poems sent by the woman and five others that the

Prince sends back in reply.³³ Out of the five poems each of the characters sends, only the first three are included in Igarashi's manga. This advanced linguistic play through an exchange of poems is born out of mutual tension and trust and poetic sensibility. The spontaneity of the exchange presents the relationship as even more intimate.

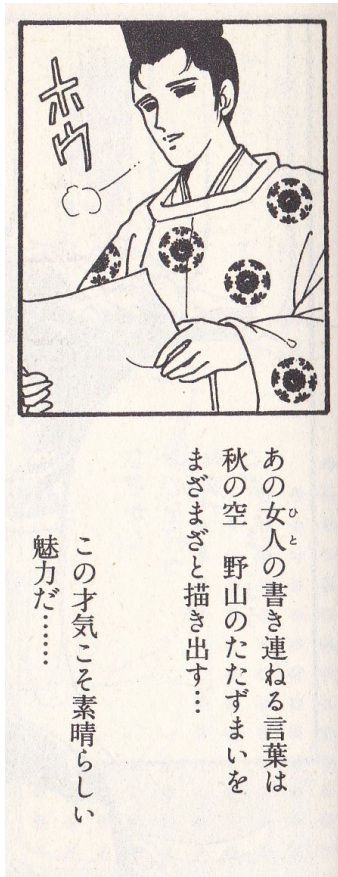


Figure 13. The Prince reads a letter from the woman (Kosakabe and Tanaka, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1990), 183. Courtesy of Heibonsha.

Likewise, in the manga adaptations, careful consideration is given to the techniques and spontaneity of the poetic exchange in order to facilitate readers' understanding of the classical text. For example, Igarashi's work includes a modern translation of the poems on the bottom of the page. Unlike Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga, which uses the original text, this adaptation offers modern colloquial translations or a summary of the

poems for readers unfamiliar with poetry and its functions. However, the inclusion of the long poetic exchange in classical Japanese in Igarashi's work effectively draws the spotlight to the poems in this scene.



Figure 14. The woman and the Prince exchange poems (Igarashi, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, 1999), 162. Courtesy of Chūō kōron shinsha.

Although the foci of the two manga versions differ, both portray the world of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* as one centering on an elegant and timely poetic exchange between two lovers, each of whom, while gazing out, is sunk in brooding thoughts imagining how the other person may be feeling. The woman in the diary spends the moonlit night gazing out at her garden, hoping that the Prince will feel the same way. As the two exchange poems

in a timely fashion, she realizes that he has a similar disposition and their love deepens. The many scenes of gazing out, illustrated with great attention through multiple panels, reveal manga artists' attempts to convey the importance of brooding thoughts to modern readers.

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined how modern manga artists represent poetry, letters, and gazing as depicted in *Izumi Shikibu nikki*. These three characteristics of the eleventh-century work are essential for understanding the story of the Prince and Izumi Shikibu but are almost inaccessible without having a sense of the cultural context of the classical world. Letters and *waka* poems formed the core of communication between men and women through their timing and expression, and the emotions they convey shaped classical literature. Highlighting the timeliness of the exchanges of poems and letters between the lovers, the two manga adaptations greatly facilitate our understanding of the Heian period.³⁴

As social media and the Internet have become a facet of everyday modern life, we have come to take for granted the ability to communicate with others instantly; this makes it difficult to grasp the importance of time in poetic exchanges one thousand years ago. While Kosakabe and Tanaka's manga includes Japanese poems as they appear in the eleventh-century work, Igarashi's manga translates them into modern Japanese and visualizes them. The former prioritizes the classical poem, while the latter attempts to make the scene more relatable to modern readers.

The implied readership of the manga becomes clear from the approach taken toward elements of the eleventh-century work that were viewed as essential at the time of its production in the Heian period. For example, another manga adaptation titled *Koi-uta: Izumi Shikibu ibun* 恋ひうた: 和泉式部異聞 (Love poems: Another story of Izumi Shikibu, 2008) features Izumi Shikibu as the main character.³⁵ It is based not only on *Izumi Shikibu nikki* but also on *Izumi Shikibu-shū* 和泉式部集 (Izumi Shikibu's poetry collection), historical tales (*rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語), and historical records. This manga recreates Izumi Shikibu's life prior to the composition of *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, specifically focusing on her relationship with Prince Tametaka (rather than Prince Atsumichi) and offers a more detailed representation of Izumi Shikibu's life. Here, however, unlike the two manga adaptations I have analyzed in this article, poetry, letters, and gazing out do not appear to be central. What seems to be a characteristic

of this adaptation is the amusing development of the story. In fact, it is a work that centers on human relationships through a contemporary perspective, while drawing from classical sources. Despite its different focus, it too uses creativity to make aspects of Heian culture, such as poetic exchange, marriage practices, and life at court, more accessible to modern readers.

Another example is *Uta-koi: Chōyaku hyakunin isshu* うた恋い: 超訳百人一首 (Love poems: Super translation of one hundred poets, one poem each, 2010).³⁶ As its subtitle suggests, it is a collection of episodes inspired by poems from the thirteenth-century poetry collection titled *Hyakunin isshu* 百人一首 (One hundred poets, one poem each). Targeted at young readers, this dynamic work is a compilation of episodes explaining different poems and human relations in a detailed and interesting manner. The great popularity of this manga led to the production of adaptations across media. Although Izumi Shikibu's poem was not initially included in *Uta-koi*, it has acquired a firm place in the later adaptations of the manga.³⁷

The general meaning of each manga adaptation differs from the source text, but they all offer a broader understanding of Heian-period literary works in an entertaining way. At a time when Japanese classics seem to be less appealing to readers, an encounter with a manga version of an old text often helps one realize how interesting the ancient worldview, culture, and literature can be. Many university students majoring in classical literature credit manga, such as *Uta-koi* and the *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The tale of Genji) manga *Asaki yume mishi* あさきゆめみし (Fleeting dreams, 1999), as their source of inspiration.³⁸ Manga shortens the one-thousand-year gap between the context of the production of classical texts and the present, making aspects of Heian culture easier to understand.³⁹ Despite their diverse foci, approaches, and drawing styles, manga adaptations offer unique perspectives and ideas and serve as a form of modern translation of ancient texts. Overcoming language barriers through images, manga break down the wall between classical literature and its archaic language and contemporary culture.

NOTES

¹ On manga adaptations of *Genji monogatari* see for example Aida Mitsuru 相田満, "Koten kokubungaku kara manga kenkyū o miru," *IPSJ SIG Technical Report* 101.10 (2014).

- ² Izumi Shikibu was one of the women poets who served as a lady-in-waiting to Empress Shōshi 中宮彰子 (also known as Fujiwara no Shōshi 藤原彰子, 988–1074). Two hundred and fifty of her poems have been included in imperial *waka* anthologies.
- ³ For the sake of this article, I use Miyuki Kondō 近藤みゆき, *Izumi Shikibu nikki* (Tokyo: Kadokawa sophia bunko 角川ソフィア文庫, 2003). I also refer to the following studies on *Izumi Shikibu nikki*: Fujioka Tadaharu 藤岡忠美, *Izumi Shikibu nikki* (Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994); Komatsu Tomi 小松登美, *Izumi Shikibu nikki zen 'yakuchū*, Kōdansha gakujutsu bunko (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980, 1985); and Nomura Seiichi 野村精一, *Izumi Shikibu nikki, Izumishikibu-shū*, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1981).
- ⁴ Kosakabe Yōko 小坂部陽子 and Tanaka Miho 田中美穂, *Manga Izumi Shikibu nikki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990).
- ⁵ Igarashi Yumiko いがらしゆみこ, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, Manga Nihon no koten 6 (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 1997, 1999). Hereinafter I refer to the paperback edition.
- ⁶ 夢よりもはかなき世の中を嘆きわびつつ明かし暮らすほどに、四月十余日にもなりぬれば、木の下くらがりもてゆく。築地の上の草あをやかなるも、人はことに目もとどめぬを、あはれとながむるほどに、近き透垣のもとに人のけはひすれば、たれならんと思ふほどに、故宮にさぶらひし小舎人童なりけり。 Kondō, 9. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
- ⁷ See for example Hakozaki Kaoru 箱崎薫, “Izumi Shikibu nikki ‘nagame’ kō,” *Fuji joshi daigaku kokubungaku zasshi* 59 (1997).
- ⁸ Kondō, 10.
- ⁹ 五月待つ花橘の香をかげば昔の人の袖の香ぞする。 Poem 139 in *Kokinshū*, “Summer,” Book 3. *Shinpen kokka taikan* (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1983).
- ¹⁰ 薫る香によそふるよりはほととぎす聞かばや同じ声やしたると。 Kondō, 11.
- ¹¹ Kosakabe and Tanaka, 30.
- ¹² 見事な返歌だ／橘の意味を即座に理解して...／兄上がその歌才を愛でられただけのことはある。 *Ibid.*, 35.
- ¹³ Igarashi, 26.
- ¹⁴ おわかりになったのだ！／さすが美しいだけでなく教養も高いと噂の和泉式部。 *Ibid.*, 29.
- ¹⁵ Itsue Takamure 高群逸枝, *Shoseikon no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1953); Emori Itsuo 江守五夫, *Nihon no kon'in* (Tokyo: Kobundō, 1986); Ko Ketsu 胡潔, *Heian kizoku no kon'in kanshū to Genji monogatari* (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 2001).

- ¹⁶ Lake Biwa is in present-day Ōtsu City 大津市, Shiga prefecture 滋賀県.
- ¹⁷ Miraculous stories associated with the temple are described in detail in the picture scroll *Ishiyama-dera engi* 石山寺縁起 (Illustrated legends of Ishiyama-dera, fourteenth century).
- ¹⁸ 苦しくても行け. *Kondō*, 39.
- ¹⁹ あはれに、思ひかけぬ所に来たれば、「何ぞ」と問はずれば、御文さし出でたるも、つねよりもふとひきあけて見れば. *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ The two works are Heian women's diaries. *Kagerō nikki* 蜻蛉日記 is authored by Fujiwara no Michitsuna's Mother 藤原道綱母 (935?-995) and *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記 was written by Sugawara no Takasue's daughter 菅原孝標女 (1008-?).
- ²¹ This scene appears in the second volume in a section dated the seventh month of 970.
- ²² 打出の浜から石山寺まで舟でいきました。牛車で京を朝早く出 石山寺に着くのは夕方頃だったそうです. *Kosakabe and Tanaka*, 167.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 171.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.
- ²⁵ *Igarashi*, 149–50.
- ²⁶ In the epilogue of the paperback edition, the manga artist *Igarashi Yumiko* shares that she actually visited *Ishiyama-dera*. Getting a feel of the distance between Kyoto and the temple and the layout of *Ishiyama-dera* must have helped her appreciate and better understand the classical work and convey the scene accordingly to readers.
- ²⁷ *Kosakabe and Tanaka*, 103–9.
- ²⁸ The idea of “*tsurezure* つれづれ” as trying to establish a link between one's feelings and body, dominated Heian women's writing and continued in medieval recluse literature. See Shimofusa Shunichi 下房俊一, “*Tzurezurekō: Tzurezuregusa jobun no kaishaku o megutte*,” *Kokugo kokubun* 46.12 (December 1977); Kawahira Toshifumi 川平敏文, *Tzurezuregusa: Mujōkan o koeta Miryoku* (Tokyo: Chuō kōron shinsha, 2020).
- ²⁹ The moon on the twentieth day of the ninth month comes out at around 10 p.m. and stays in the sky until morning.
- ³⁰ もの心細く、つねよりもあはれにおぼえて、ながめてぞありける. *Kondō*, 42.
- ³¹ あの女人の書き連ねる言葉は／秋の空 野山のたたずまいをまざまざと描き出す...／この才気こそ素晴らしい魅力だ..... *Kosakabe and Tanaka*, 182–83.
- ³² *Igarashi*, 162.
- ³³ According to the etiquette of exchanging poems, the number of the poems sent should be matched by the number of the poems sent back in reply. The poems

sent back should respond to the other poems in the order they were originally received.

- ³⁴ In this article, I have compared the eleventh-century *Izumi Shikibu nikki* with manga, but it would be meaningful to compare illustrated versions of the work from premodern Japan with manga in terms of iconography. One such example is an illustrated edition of the work titled *Izumi Shikibu monogatari* (*Izumi Shikibu nikki*) published in 1670, which also effectively depicts the scene of gazing out (*nagame*).
- ³⁵ Ebira Hiromi 江平洋巳, *Koi-uta: Izumi Shikibu ibun*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2008).
- ³⁶ Sugita Kei 杉田圭, *Uta-koi.: Chōyaku hyakunin issbu*, 4 vols. (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2010–2013).
- ³⁷ *Izumi Shikibu's* poem reads, “*ara zaran kono yo no hoka no omoide ni ima hito tabi no au koto mo ga na*. あらざらむこの世のほかの思ひ出に今ひとたびのあふこともがな.” The manga series has inspired the production of drama CDs, an animation TV series, and DVDs.
- ³⁸ Yamato Waki 大和和紀, *Asaki yume mishi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2001). This is the bestselling *Genji* manga.
- ³⁹ Manga adaptations of classical literature fully utilize the distinct storytelling techniques of the medium. From May to August 2019, a large-scale manga exhibition took place at the British Museum and provided a broad overview of Japan's manga culture. The event was well-documented through various publications that focus on manga's storytelling techniques and depictions of what is visible and invisible. These techniques are evident in the manga works I have analyzed in this article. See Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere and Matsuba Ryoko, eds., *Manga* (London: The British Museum, 2019).