Reading the Literary Canon through Manga in the Twenty-First Century

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Every year, new renditions of literary works of the distant past expand the manga market in Japan. [1] Through careful scene selections, textual revisions, and vibrant illustrations, these adaptations present the ancient texts as "interesting" (*omoshiroi* 面白い), "easy to read" (*yasashiku yomeru* やさしく読める) and "belonging to us" (*watashi-tachi no koten* わたしたちの古典), thus attempting to widen the audience of classical literature. [2] Although heavily modified, many recent rewritings of Japanese classics are marketed as educational tools and are sold side-by-side with government-issued guides to high school and college entrance exams and practice test collections. Despite their prominence in contemporary cultural production, however, manga adaptations of Heian (794–1185) literary works have not attracted much scholarly attention because they lie at the intersections of two disciplines: manga studies and premodern literature. [3]

The essays in this special edition of *Japanese Language and Literature*, "Heian Literature in Manga," attempt to fill this lacuna and offer tools for understanding the multiple functions that manga appropriations of literary works written over a millennium ago perform in present-day Japan. The title "Heian Literature in Manga" is inspired by a panel "Selling the Classics: Heian Literature in Manga," which was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Washington, D. C., in 2018. [4] During the conference, Mika Saito, Joshua S. Mostow, Gergana E. Ivanova, and Pana Barova-Özcan each examined manga adaptations of *Taketori monogatari* 竹取物語 (The tale of the bamboo cutter, early tenth century), *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (The Ise stories, tenth century), *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子 (The pillow book, early eleventh century), and *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記 (The Sarashina diary, ca.

1058) respectively to explore how and why these ancient works have been rewritten for readers in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Additionally, to offer a broader array of manga adaptations of Heian literary works in this special issue, two more scholars have contributed expertise in Heian literature: Otilia Milutin on *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The tale of Genji, early eleventh century) and Kayono Shiba on *Izumi Shikibu nikki* 和泉式部 (The Izumi Shikibu diary, eleventh century). All contributors are scholars of premodern literature and present six international perspectives on the influence manga has had in popularizing Heian classics by exploring modern interpretations as well as which aspects of the ancient texts have been promoted for readers in Japan today.

Some of the questions these essays address are: Why do ancient texts continue to play an important role in Japanese cultural production in the twenty-first century? How has the manga medium re-invented texts of Japan's distant past and constructed a national tradition and character? What strategies do publishers employ to market classical works? What insights do these adaptations provide about manga's function as a powerful tool for expanding cultural literacy? Drawing parallels to medieval and early modern illustrated renditions of some classical literary works, these studies further examine how ancient texts are utilized to address current social issues in Japan, including women's empowerment, sexual violence, gender and sexuality, and cultural nationalism.

The literary works that inspired the manga rewritings featured in "Heian Literature in Manga" are among the earliest examples of vernacular poetry and prose that emerged in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Although at the beginning of the twentieth century all these texts were mobilized in the creation of a national literature intended to "integrate the people culturally, politically, and socially into the new Meiji state," in Haruo Shirane's words, each text has had its unique reception history and illustration tradition.[5] The diverse styles of these Heian-period texts led early twentieth-century scholars to retroactively attribute them to genres, such as *tsukuri-monogatari* 作り物語 (fiction tale), *uta-monogatari* 歌物語 (poem tale), *zuihitsu* 随筆 (miscellany), and *nikki* 日記 (court women's memoirs). Although these labels focusing on the formal features of classical texts have facilitated their categorization, they have greatly influenced how the works have been interpreted and assessed since then.

In manga, however, the traditional taxonomies through which classical texts have been approached in the fields of national literature and

education, specifically as belonging to genres and to the body of works known as Heian literature, no longer seem to be central to understanding these texts. Although the three volumes of Hōmusha's *NHK Manga de yomu koten* NHK まんがで読む古典 (NHK's Reading the classics through manga, 2014) gesture towards the labels through which Heian works have been generally known over the past century, namely *zuihitsu*, *nikki*, and *monogatari*, thus presenting *Makura no sōshi* in volume 1, *Sarashina nikki* and *Kagerō nikki* 蜻蛉日記 (The Kagerō diary, tenth century) in volume 2, and *Genji monogatari* and *Ise monogatari* in volume 3 respectively, the majority of manga series are not organized around genres. They include works beyond the Heian period as well and spotlight only a few texts from the tenth to the early twelfth century.[6] Moreover, despite the firm place these six Heian-period texts occupy in the Japanese literary canon as it is taught today within and outside Japan, no manga series features all of them together. For example, *Sarashina nikki* and *Izumi Shikibu nikki* were left out of the fifteen volumes of *Komikku sutōrī watashi-tachi no koten* コミックストーリーわたしたちの古典 (Comic story, our classics) in 2009, and intriguingly, only *Genji monogatari* and *Izumi Shikibu nikki* were included in the thirty-two volumes of *Manga Nihon no koten* マンガ日本の古典 (Manga Japanese classics) in 2017. As a visual form of storytelling, manga has transformed classical texts into stories about engaging characters. Driven by standards such as originality and popularity, producers engage with ancient works in innovative ways rather than preoccupying themselves with their formal features. In this special edition, we examine works from various manga series published in the past three decades and show how, through manga adaptations, classical texts have been reaching a wide readership, selling millions of copies annually.

Manga for Educational Purposes

The manga adaptations that contributors examine in this special edition come from a broad category known as *kyōiku manga* 教育マンガ, or educational manga. An understudied genre, this is an amorphous and nebulous category because of the diversity of the targeted audience and topics.[7] Although initially it was closely related to academic subjects taught in Japanese schools, in our image-led world this genre has come to comprise works offering all kinds of knowledge to both children and adults.

Associated closely with entertainment, manga used to be placed beyond the boundaries of valuable learning. Acclaimed manga artists in the twentieth century began to challenge the idea that manga was not

appropriate reading material for children, as Itō Yū's 伊藤遊 study has shown. Among the earliest attempts to bring manga closer to the field of education was Aki Reiji's 秋玲二 (1910−2006) "Benkyō manga" 勉強漫画 (Study manga). Aware of the government's lack of interest in promoting scientific knowledge among children, unlike the USA and England, Aki began contributing four-panel manga to *Tōnichi shōgakusei shinbun* 東日小学生新聞 (Eastern Japan Elementary School Newspaper), a monthly periodical targeted at elementary school children.[8] Hoping to help Japanese children cultivate interest in science, over the course of five years from 1939 to 1944, Aki drew manga that featured school material covered in subjects such as Japanese, or national language (*kokugo* 国語), math (*sūgaku* 数学), natural science (*rika* 理科), and society (*shakai* 社会). Soon his work gained popularity and emerged outside the monthly periodical as single-volume books.[9]

Another example of an early educational manga is Yokoyama Ryūichi's 横山隆一 (1909−2001) *Ponchan no itazura nikki* ポンちゃんの悪戯日記 (Ponchan's diary of pranks) included in the series *Kagaku manga* 科学マンガ (Science manga) published by Chūō Kōronsha in 1938. According to Itō, the statement on the inside front cover (*mikaeshi* 見返し) has had a great impact on bringing manga closer to education in post-war Japan. This statement maintains that the goal of the publication is to bring scientific knowledge to children in a simple (*heii ni* 平易に), interesting (*omoshiroku* 面白く), and accurate (*tadashiku* 正しく) way through manga as the most intimate medium for young readers. Condemning "unhealthy" (*fukenkō* 不健康) manga, the producers express their excitement at the opportunity to deliver to households throughout the country accurate scientific knowledge with a "clear conscience" (*ryōshin ni hajinai* 良心に恥じない).[10] In these early years, educational manga functioned as "a medium aimed at children in order to [help them] acquire knowledge and information about adult society [*otona no shakai* 大人の社会], which had been provided by the same adults" as Itō has asserted.[11]

In the 1980s, Akatsuka Fujio 赤塚不二夫 (1935−2008) pioneered the genre "educational manga for adults" (*otona no gakushū manga* 大人の学習マンガ) with the publication of *Nyarome no omoshiro sūgaku kyōshitsu* ニャロメのおもしろ数学教室 (Nyarome's fun mathematics classroom). In the "Conclusion" (*Owari ni* おわりに) of the work, Akatsuka regrets that educators failed to introduce his generation to the breathtaking (*suriru no tonda* スリルの富んだ) world of mathematics. To him, the only

explanation would be that "because it is too interesting, it wouldn't seem like school learning and that's why they [educators] deliberately picked tedious teaching methods."[12] This statement reveals that unlike earlier works in the same genre, educational manga had taken a different direction, distancing itself from school education.

Itō further explains that Ishinomori Shōtarō's 石ノ森章太郎 (1938–1998) forty-eight volumes of *Manga Nihon no rekishi* マンガ日本の歴史 (Manga Japanese history, 1989–1993) was the first manga on Japanese history advertised for adults. The artist's intention, however, did not match the Ministry of Education's view of educational manga as a medium aimed at young audiences only and as a tool to augment children's lack of desire to read written texts. The government approval of the idea of using manga to bring value to school learning centered on their view of manga as prompting children to visit libraries and further encouraging them to read books rather than as expanding adult's understanding of Japanese history.[13]

The proactive use of manga in the sphere of education began when Ishinomori joined a committee established by the Ministry of Education in 1994 to evaluate educational reading materials for small children and students.[14] Japanese bookstores began to devote entire sections to educational resources with names such as *kōkō kokugoka* 高校国語科 (national language for high school) and *kōkō sankōsho* 高校参考書 (study aid-books for high school), which have been dominated primarily by manga adaptations of classical literary works and manga-based study guides. As blurbs on the publishers' websites and on the covers of these study aids further suggest, there is a strong link between their production and the inclusion of classical literature in school curricula and high-school and university entrance exams. Many of them claim that they can contribute to securing high scores on university entrance exams and offer tips on how to solve exam problems.

The definition of educational manga has been greatly expanded in the recent years. Since 2015, a project sponsored by the Nippon Foundation has been challenging misconceptions about educational manga by promoting the idea of "edutainment," or learning and entertainment. Titled "Kore mo gakushū manga da: manga edutainment" これも学習マンガだ Manga Edutainment (This is also educational manga: Manga edutainment), the project introduces readers within and outside Japan to manga that is related to learning. According to the project's description, the "goal is making a better society by focusing on manga's 'enjoyment' [*tanoshisa* 楽しさ], 'lucidity' [*wakariyasusa* 分かりやすさ], and 'empathy'

[*kyōkanryoku* 共感力]."[15] The website of the project introduces manga works in eleven categories, including literature, life and the world, war, society, science and learning, professions, and sports.[16] As the title of the project and the selected works since 2015 suggest, the current understanding of educational manga is not limited to material associated with an academic discipline or school subjects.

Japan's rich tradition of visualizing classical texts since the twelfth century reveals that manga is by no way exceptional in its attempts to transpose written texts into pictorial form. Although modern readers most frequently encounter classical literature today as vivid images and text abounding in slang and onomatopoeia, not all these literary works of the distant past were viewed as amenable to illustration over the centuries. Based on extant sources available to us, scholars have concluded that *Taketori monogatari*, *Genji monogatari*, and *Ise monogatari* were more often reproduced in visual form than *Makura no sōshi*, *Izumi Shikibu nikki*, and *Sarashina nikki*. The very terms *Genji-e* (Genji pictures) and *Ise-e* (Ise pictures) reveal that the two works have offered rich material to artists over the centuries.

What serve as primary sources in the present are textual and visual iterations completed by the hands of later scribes, scholars, writers, and artists rather than irretrievable manuscripts brushed by Heian writers. Initially intended for a small aristocratic audience in the tenth and eleventh centuries, classical texts reemerged as handscrolls (*emaki* 絵巻) featuring excerpts from the earlier manuscripts and illustrations of the text as early as the twelfth century. The pioneer of this genre is the polychrome *Genji monogatari emaki* (The tale of Genji illustrated scroll, twelfth century).[17] Polychrome *Genji* paintings also circulated as folding fans, book covers, screens, and square sheets of colored paper (*shikishi* 色紙) to meet various needs of the highest levels of the aristocracy and the warrior class. Resulting from joint efforts of calligraphers and artists, these works embodied "the interests and aspirations of their sponsors," in Melissa McCormick's words.[18] Monochromatic paintings (*hakubyō* 白描) brought classical works closer to women in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries by way of their personalized approach to visualizing the classics. From the late fifteenth century to the eighteenth century Heian literary works were further reproduced within the genre of *nara-ehon* 奈良絵本 (Nara picture books) and *nara-emaki* 奈良絵巻 (Nara illustrated scrolls), which focused on literary works from the Kamakura (1185−1333) and the Muromachi period (1336−1573) but did not exclude texts compiled in the

earlier centuries. These works made classical texts available to women and children outside the circles of the privileged elite as well.[19]

The advent of commercial publishing in the seventeenth century brought classical literature closer to readers from all walks of life. Produced in a wide range of formats, Heian literary works emerged in the book market often accompanied by images within genres, such as *sharebon* 洒落本 (works related to the culture of brothel districts), *jokunsho* 女訓書 (instruction manuals for women), and *shunpon* 春本 (erotic books). To many readers, these later works inspired by Heian texts stood for the ancient writings themselves.[20] Illustrated versions of Heian texts performed diverse functions over the centuries: from offering entertainment, to serving as educational tools, to functioning as cultural capital. Although classical texts were greatly altered, they shed light on how people in the centuries following the Heian period imagined the eleventh-century writers and interpreted their works.

"Selling" the Classics

On the covers of study guides sold in Japanese bookstores today, manga characters featuring historical figures and young people living in the present invite readers to join them in exploring Japan's classical literary and linguistic heritage. These popular adaptations reframe Heian literary works into stories that are easy to understand by replacing ancient language with modern slang, selecting topics that resonate with present-day readers, and comparing aspects of Heian life to contemporary Japanese culture. In the "Introduction" or the "Afterword" of these texts, manga artists, popular writers, educators, and literary scholars involved in the production of these adaptations further attempt to convince the reader that classical literature is interesting and enjoyable. Many of these works recreate the past as heavily modelled on the present day and thus anchored in the imaginary realm of manga rather than in the Heian period. For example, Sei Shōnagon appears as a career-driven woman in *Makura no sōshi* manga, the protagonist of *Ise monogatari* is introduced as a playboy, and the heroine of *Sarashina nikki* is presented as an *otaku* (オタク), or a nerd. These new images reflect trends in Japanese society, but they also make the works more accessible at the expense of distancing them even further from the context of their original production. How can these manga versions then be used as educational tools when they differ so strikingly from their Heian-period counterparts?

To readers familiar with Heian texts, manga adaptations may seem too short and over-simplified because they are often limited to selected scenes from the source texts. As manga artist Hebizō 蛇蔵 explains at the end of her work titled *Nihonjin nara shitte okitai Nihon bungaku* 日本人なら知っておきたい日本文学 (Japanese Literature a Japanese Should Know, 2011), despite the abundance of interpretations of classical literary texts and assumptions about them shared by literary scholars, manga artists, without being experts in classical literature, are tasked with introducing these works concisely within a limited number of frames. Instead of trying to recreate the Heian writings in their entirety, manga artists focus on major ideas and themes to allow readers opportunities to learn a little more than just the name of the author, and thus offer, in Hebizō's words, "a window through which to peep into a different world."[21] Hebizō alludes to the ways in which classical literature is taught in school today, specifically the focus on the title, the generic categorization, and the name of the author rather than the content of the work.

The Kumon shuppan series *Kyōkasho ni dete kuru koten* 教科書にでてくる古典 (Classical literature that appears in textbooks, 2019) further purports that "classes become more enjoyable when one gets a general grasp of the content of a classical work through manga before studying it in a textbook."[22] In other words, early exposure to ancient literary writing through manga leads to increased engagement with class material later. Likewise, the volume *Daigaku juken rakuraku bukku: Kobun* 大学受験らくらくブック 古文 (University entrance exam easy-peasy cram book: classical Japanese, 2007) in the series *Shin manga zemināru* 新マンガゼミナール (New manga seminar) is advertised by emphasizing the role of manga when preparing for entrance exams, namely that precisely because it is manga-based material, it will help readers solve exam problems more easily and attain higher exam scores.[23]

In a similar way, *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu* ちびまる子ちゃんの古典教室 (Chibi Maruko-chan's classical literature classroom, 2014) in the "Getting a Perfect Score Series" (*Manten getto shirīzu* 満点ゲットシリーズ) featuring works from the Nara (710–784) to the Edo (1603–1867) periods, introduces ancient texts in ways that resonate with readers.[24] Thus, the six Heian works that are the focus of this special edition are each titled in the following way: "*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*: The First Tale!?," "*Ise Stories*: It's Tough to be a Handsome Man," "*The Pillow Book*: The Shrewd Viewpoint of a Career-Oriented Woman," "*The Tale of Genji*: The Protagonist—a Superstar Named The Shining

Genji," "*The Izumi Shikibu Dairy*: The Reason She Was Called an Amorous Woman," "*The Sarashina Diary*: What the Dreaming Girl [*shōjo* 少女] Longed for."[25] Among the many possible readings and aspects of classical literary texts, producers of manga adaptations approach them from angles that encourage readers to connect emotionally with the characters and pique their interest. The drastic makeover of classical literary works makes manga more commercially successful, but it also reveals general attitudes concerning courtship and marriage, women's creativity and erudition, sexuality, and gender roles in Japan today.

New Definitions of *koten*

Manga adaptations come in different formats, from book-length and sometimes comprising multiple volumes to excerpts of various works included in one volume. They also appear in various manga series of the classics containing diverse selections of rewritings of ancient texts. These series range from the thirty-two-volume collection *Manga Nihon no koten* (2017) to the three-volume series *Kyōkasho ni dete kuru koten* (2019). Even the same series, *NHK Manga de yomu koten* features different works when released by different publishers.[26] As manga has become the main medium for reading classical literature, a look at these series, specifically what works are included and excluded, reveals how publishers approach the concept of *koten*. Although literary works have their own history of how each has been assessed, re-read, and re-interpreted over the centuries, modern adaptations in the manga genre present the canonical status of the ancient works as uncontested since their production about a thousand years ago. Considering the powerful role of manga adaptations in the dissemination of Heian classics in present-day Japan, one could even reflect on the phenomenon of canon formation taking place in manga and the factors that drive this process.[27]

To further increase the appeal of classical works, manga adaptations emphasize the importance of studying them beyond preparation for entrance exams. For example, *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu* explains that *koten* 古典—usually translated as "classics" or "canonical works," but in the Japanese context referring to classical literature—stands for "literary works that people of a country have preserved with care, thinking that 'Because what is written in these books is important and though the world changes, they won't be forgotten and will continue to be read into the future.'"[28] Having explained the importance of literary works of the past, this manga continues to praise readers, stating: "You, who have

also turned your eyes to the world of the 'classics' Japanese people have treasured since the distant past, are cool [*kakkoii* カッコイイ]!"[29] *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu* thus asserts that knowledge about classical literature makes people admirable. The significance of Japanese classics is also emphasized in a manga adaptation of *Makura no sōshi* produced by Kyoto prefecture. This work titled *Manga Makura no sōshi: Nihon no koten o yomō! Shirō!* マンガ枕草子：日本の古典を読もう！知ろう！(*The Pillow Book* manga: Let's read and learn about Japanese classical literature!, 2010) replicates the full text of the proclamation of Classical Literature Day (*koten no hi* 古典の日) in 2008 by Kyoto Prefecture. Quoting from the proclamation, the author explains the importance of classical literature stating, "Precisely because the world is constantly changing, by studying the classics [*koten*] at this moment, cherishing them strongly, and making them our anchorage, we can communicate more deeply with people around the world."[30]

This current view of the classics is reminiscent of the attitude toward classical texts of the distant past within the discipline of national literature (*kokubungaku* 国文学) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: designing a national literary canon to express the essence of the Japanese nation and to construct a national culture. Placing educational value on literature and its study, "the utility of advancing human knowledge as well as fostering nationalism" in Tomiko Yoda's words, early twentieth-century scholars "actively constructed literature and literary education as a means of disseminating patriotism and promoting ethical attitudes befitting a national subject."[31] Japan's shifting position vis-à-vis the rest of the world led educators and intellectuals to reconsider the meaning of being Japanese in an international context and to employ Heian literary works to construct an image of Japan as a civilized and even superior nation-state.

The current idea that having endured the test of time, literary works of the distant past serve as sources of stability, strength, and confidence in unstable and unpredictable times carries explicit nationalistic overtones and perpetuates the notion of a unified Japanese identity. It also reflects new attitudes toward classical literature upheld by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in the curriculum guidelines announced in 2008. Establishing a new educational category of "Traditional Linguistic Culture and Characteristics of the National Language" these guidelines called for "greater importance to be attached to instruction that nurtures a lifelong fondness for classical literature [*koten ni shitashimu* 古典に親しむ]."[32] The guidelines urged adoption of

teaching approaches that would help students of elementary and middle school appreciate and enjoy classical texts.

In response to these guidelines, many educators and scholars have addressed the issue of how to reform classroom instruction to cultivate appreciation for classical literature among students. As Matsumura Mina 松村美奈 has pointed out, however, in addition to the need of developing engaging study materials, what is even more pressing is training educators to enjoy the classics themselves. If teachers harbor distaste (*ken'okan* 嫌悪感) for the material they teach, they pass that negative attitude on to learners.[33] Matsumura's remark suggests that not only many current students but also readers of various generations consider classical literary works alienating. Almost two decades earlier, Hashimoto Osamu 橋本治 acknowledged widespread contempt for the classics by dedicating his modern translation into girl's slang—*Momojiri goyaku Makura no sōshi* 桃尻語訳枕草子 ("The Pillow Book": Translated into peach-bottomed girls' language, 1998)—to "those who felt furious about university entrance exam preparation and those who are currently goaded by anger."[34] In this context, the medium of manga emerges as an effective and powerful tool for cultivating appreciation for Japan's literary heritage.

The articles included in this special edition engage with the questions of how manga adaptations of the classics translate the past for readers and how they reflect present-day Japan. Mika Saitō examines the shift from *Taketori monogatari* to the modern *Kaguyahime monogatari* かぐや姫物語 (The tale of Princess Kaguya) by positioning manga rewritings of the tenth-century tale in the long history of visualization of the work. Comparing manga to *nara ehon* and *nara emaki* from the late Muromachi and the Edo periods in which the story centers on the character of the old bamboo cutter, she shows that this shift can best be understood in terms of the perceived needs of their audiences. She argues that the modern focus on the female figure referred to as Princess Kaguya has clear educational implications and originates in government-sanctioned school textbooks published in the first half of the twentieth century.

Joshua S. Mostow considers the role of visual intertextuality in transposing *Ise monogatari* into manga form. Focusing on Kurogane Hiroshi's 黒鉄ヒロシ (1945−) 2013 version for the *Manga koten bungaku* (Manga classical literature) series, he demonstrates the potential manga has for expanding readers' premodern cultural literacy, through Kurogane's quotation and appropriation of icons from the breadth of Japan's art history. Among the three manga adaptations Mostow examines,

only this *gyagu* ギャグ (comic) manga has been inspired by the tradition of visualizing the tenth-century tale in premodern Japan. It comes from a manga series that uses as a selling point the fact that the manga artists have followed primary sources (*genten* 原典) in recreating the classical texts.[35]

Gergana E. Ivanova explores how popular culture challenges Japanese school education and its approaches to teaching classical literature. Taking *Makura no sōshi* as a case study, which is usually, and problematically, classified as a *zuihitsu* (miscellany), she shows how manga adaptations introduce new perceptions of what the eleventh-century text is and present it as a coherent story that traces the working career of its female protagonist. Manga make the eleventh-century work appealing to modern audiences by identifying strands of the work that intersect with the experiences of modern girls and women. These works provide a necessary corrective to the official pedagogical tradition, which teaches through keywords that not only guarantee boredom but also misrepresent the internal diversity of *Makura no sōshi*.

Otilia Milutin examines modern depictions of sexual violence in *Genji monogatari* by focusing on episodes that deal with problematic sexual encounters in two manga renditions of the work—one targeting a female audience and another intended for a male readership. She argues that although the artists take different approaches to these scenes, either erasing the rape scenes or romanticizing them, these works still tend to normalize such violence, either by situating it within relevant conventions or by erasing it altogether.

Kayono Shiba considers how manga versions of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* utilize visual and textual techniques to convey the significance and meanings of three central aspects of the work. Analyzing Japanese poems, letters, and acts of gazing as presented in two manga adaptations of the eleventh-century work, she argues that the recent iterations have successfully captured the characteristics of *Izumi Shikibu nikki* generally accepted in contemporary scholarly circles, and have convincingly conveyed the sensibility shared among the main characters. Shiba further points to the new ways in which women's culture of the Heian period is presented to modern readers and considers the implications of such shifts.

Finally, Pana Barova-Özcan takes up images of the reading woman and their implications in *Sarashina nikki* manga. Exploring how adaptations published since the 1990s address the conflict between fiction and life choices for women, rather than the conflict between fiction and religion, which is a central theme in the eleventh-century work, she draws

conclusions about shifts in views on femininity over the past three decades. Although the three versions she discusses use different approaches to the construction of the diarist, they all cater to young female audiences. Reflecting the gender biases of Japanese society at large, they all are conservative in this sense—the most recent manga constructs the protagonist as an *otaku* who eschews marriage and points to shifting attitudes toward women in the workplace.

All of these articles demonstrate how manga adaptations recontextualize Heian writers and their works in the familiar landscape of today to bring them closer to the reader and emphasize the timeless and enduring character of classical literature. Using contemporary Japanese slang, visually stunning art, and universal themes such as sexuality, family, and life paths for women, manga successfully transform ancient texts into engaging, accessible works that continue to spark interest in Japan's literary heritage in the twenty-first century and broaden readers' knowledge of the past. These studies can thus contribute to effective teaching of classical literature both within and outside Japan.

NOTES

[1] I refer to manga as defined by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, "Manga is a visual form of narrative storytelling that employs the power of line to 'draw' the reader into the story." See Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, "Manga for Everyone," in *Manga: The Citi Exhibition*, ed. by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, and Matsuba Ryoko (London: Thames & Hudson, The British Museum, 2019).

[2] The titles of the following works are some examples among the many others: Kamiyu rekishi henshū-bu かみゆ歴史編集部, *Manga omoshiroi hodo yoku wakaru! Kojiki* (Tokyo: Seitōsha, 2017), Tsuchiya Hiroei 土屋博映, *Manga to arasuji de yasashiku yomeru Nihon no koten kessaku 30 sen* (Tokyo: Tokyo shoten, 2012); Hasegawa Takashi 長谷川孝士, Komikku sutōrī *Watashi-tachi no koten* series (Tokyo: Gakkō tosho, 2009).

[3] Some of the few studies of manga adaptations of classical literary works include Lynne K. Miyake, "Graphically Speaking: Manga Versions of *The Tale of Genji*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 63.2 (2008): 359−92; Yuika Kitamura, "Sexuality, Gender, and Th*e Tale of Genji* in Modern Japanese Translations and Manga" in *Envisioning The Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 329–57; and Mimura Yūko, "Shōjo manga no naka no *Makura no sōshi*—Chūgū Teishi no mō hitotsu no koi to Shōshi no henbō," in *Makura no sōshi: Sōzō to shinsei*, ed. Tsushima Tomoaki and Komori Kiyoshi (Tokyo: Kanrin shobō, 2011), 315−16.

[4] I am indebted to R. Keller Kimbrough for serving as a discussant and offering insightful comments.

[5] Haruo Shirane, "Introduction: Issues in Canon Formation," in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 11.

[6] One example is *Manga Nihon no koten*, in which the Heian period is represented by one *nikki* (*Izumi Shikibu nikki*) and three *monogatari* (*Genji monogatari*, *Tsustumi Chūnagon monogatari*, and *Konjaku monogatari*).

[7] Itō Yū 伊藤遊, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," in *Kokusai manga kenkyū 3 Nichi-kan manga kenkyū* (International Manga Research Center, Kyoto Seika University, 2013).

[8] This newspaper is currently known as *Mainichi shōgakusei shinbun* 毎日小学生新聞 (Daily newspaper for elementary school children).

[9] Itō, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," 205-6.

[10] Imai Yoshitaka 今井 喜孝 et al., "Kagaku manga ni tsuite fukei e," *Kagaku manga* (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1938), inside front cover. Cited in Itō, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," 206.

[11] 大人の社会を生きる情報・知識を得るため、当の大人が用意した子ども向けメディア. Itō, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," 208.

[12] あまり面白すぎると学校の勉強として格好がつかなくなるから、わざとつまらない方法で教えていたようにしか思えないのです. Akatsuka Fujio 赤塚不二夫, *Nyarome no omoshiro sūgaku kyōshitsu* (Tokyo: Pashifika, 1981), 218. Cited in Itō, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," 210.

[13] Itō, "Gakushū manga kenkyū josetsu: kyōiku, kyarakutā, riaritī," 211−12.

[14] Sakiguchi Susumu, *Terebi bunka: Nihon no katachi* (Tokyo: Gakubunsha, 1996), 16−17. The inclusion of manga artists in government committees continues with the most recent example being the Manga Division Selection Committee for the Japan Media Arts Festival hosted by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan (Bunkachō 文化庁). Accessed February 14, 2021,

https://j-mediaarts.jp/en/contest/jury_members/.

[15] マンガの持つ「楽しさ」「分かりやすさ」「共感力」に着目し、社会をより良いものにしていくことを目的としています．Accessed February 24, 2021, https://gakushumanga.jp/concept/.

[16] Yamato Waki's 大和和紀 adaptation of *Genji monogatari*, *Asaki yumemishi* あさきゆめみし, included in the category of literature is the only work inspired by a classical text. See Yamato Waki, *Asaki yumemishi: Genji monogatari* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980–1991). See also the website of the project, accessed February 27, 2021, https://gakushumanga.jp/concept/.

[17] *Genji monogatari emaki* is believed to have been produced in ten to twelve scrolls containing more than one hundred excerpts and paintings, or approximately two scenes from each of the fifty-four chapters. Only twenty paintings and twenty-nine excerpts have survived. See Yukio Lippit, "Figure and Fracture in the *Genji Scrolls*: Text, Calligraphy, Paper, and Painting," in *Envisioning "The Tale of Genji": Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 49.

[18] Melissa McCormick, "Monochromatic *Genji*: The Hakubyō Tradition and Female Commentarial Culture,' in *Envisioning "The Tale of Genji": Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 106.

[19] See Masuda Katsumi 益田勝実, "Nihon no ehon zenshi" *Nihon jidō bungaku* 17.13 (1971): 42. Cited in Mika Saito's article in this special edition.

[20] For examples of how Edo-period works inspired by Heian literary texts came to represent the source texts, see Michael Emmerich, "Ninety-Nine Years in the Life of an Image," *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 41–186; Joshua S. Mostow, "Epilogue: The Ise Stories and Their Imagery in the Later Edo and Modern Periods," *Courtly Visions: "The Ise Stories" and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation*, Japanese Visual Culture 12 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 257–78; and Gergana Ivanova, "*The Pillow Book* for Early Modern Female Readers," *Unbinding "The Pillow Book": The Many Lives of a Japanese Classic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 84–120.

[21] 違う世界を覗き見る「窓」. Hebizō 蛇蔵 & Umino Nagiko 海野凪子, *Nihonjin nara shitte okitai Nihon bungaku: Yamato Takeru kara Kenkō made jinbutsu de yomu koten* (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 2011), 125.

[22] 教科書で学習する前に、古典の内容をおおまかにつかんでおくと、授業がもっと楽しくなる！Mori Yūko 森有子, and Hirata Yoshinobu 平田喜信, *Manga de sakidoru Makura no sōshi, Kyōkasho ni dete kuru koten* (Tokyo: Kumon shuppan, 2019), accessed May 21, 2020, https://www.kumonshuppan.com/ehon/ehon-syousai/?code=39669.

23 Fujii Kenji 藤井健二, Sakai Ryōtarō 酒井良太郎, and Ōtani Shinji 大谷慎治, *Daigaku juken rakuraku bukku* (Tokyo: Gakken purasu, 2007), accessed May 21, 2020, https://hon.gakken.jp/book/1130246600.

24 Kaida Momoko 貝田桃子, and Sakura Momoko さくらももこ, *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2014).

25 竹取物語…「物語の元祖！？」;伊勢物語…「美男はつらいよ」;枕草子…「キャリア女性の鋭い視点」;和泉式部日記…「恋多き女と呼ばれた理由」;源氏物語…「主人公は光源氏というスーパースター」;更級日記…「夢見る少女のあこがれ」. Kaida and Sakura, *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu*, 3. The description of *Ise monogatari* "Binan wa tsurai yo" plays on the title of the popular series *Otoko wa tsurai yo* 男はつらいよ (It's tough to be a man, 1969–1995).

26 See Gergana E. Ivanova's article included in this special edition "Beyond 'In Spring, the Dawn': Redeeming *The Pillow Book* through Manga."

27 I am grateful to R. Keller Kimbrough for pointing out that the inclusion of literary texts in the series *NHK Manga de yomu koten* both reconfirmed their canonical status in the twentieth century and erased the differences in the reception history of each work.

28 この本に書かれてあることはとても大事だから、世の中が変わってもずっと忘れられずに、未来にも読み継がれていくようにしよう. Kaida Momoko, and Sakura Momoko, *Chibi Maruko-chan no koten kyōshitsu*, 10.

29 大昔から日本人が大切にしてきた「古典」の世界にも目を向けているあなたは、カッコイイなあ！ Ibid.

30 揺れ動く世界のうちにあるからこそ、私たちは、いま古典を学び、これをしっかりと心に抱き、これを私たちのよりどころとして、世界の人々とさらに深く心を通わせよう. Cited fully in Nakazora Tomomi 中空朋美, *Manga Makura no sōshi: Nihon no koten o yomō! Shirō!*, ed. Kyoto seika daigaku jigyō suishinshitsu (Kyoto: Kyoto-fu bunka kankyō-bu bunka geijutsushitsu, 2010), 24. The full text of the proclamation appears also on the Classical Literature Day's website, accessed May 21, 2020, http://www.kotennohi.jp/?page_id=2305.

31 Tomiko Yoda, *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham, N. C. and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 59.

32 生涯にわたって古典に親しむ態度を育成する指導を重視する. Monbu-kagakushō, *Shōgakkō gakushū shidō yōryō kaisetsu: kokugo-hen* (2008), 5, accessed May 21, 2020, https://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2010/12/28/1231931_02.pdf.

33 Matsumura Mina 松村美奈, "(Kenkyū nōto) Dentō-tekina gengo bunka ni shitashimu jugyō no arikata ni tsuite: Shō, chūgakkō kokugoka o chūshin ni,"

Aichi daigaku kyōshoku katei kenkyū nenpō 5 (2015): 107–11, 110, accessed May 21, 2020, https://taweb.aichi-u.ac.jp/kyosyoku/pdf02/work201508.pdf.

[34] 受験勉強に頭に来ていた諸氏諸嬢、ならびに受験勉強に頭に来ている諸君へ. Hashimoto Osamu 橋本治, *Momojiri goyaku Makura no sōshi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kawade bunko, 2007), 3. Cited in Ivanova, *Unbinding* "The Pillow Book," 153.

[35] Accessed February 21, 2021. https://www.shogakukan.co.jp/news/208960.