

Foreword

Four of these seven essays were published under different titles and in earlier forms between 1999 and 2006, and a fifth appeared in Japanese translation in 2008.¹ The most recently written (“Genji and the Luck of the Sea”) dates from 2007. Its initial version, like that of all the others, has been extensively revised, re-titled, and updated for this publication.

Sympathy for Murasaki in her struggle to hold her own in her relationship with Genji inspired the opening essay and led, through analysis of Genji’s marriage to the Third Princess, to further work on that theme and others. The standpoint throughout the collection is that of a translator intensely concerned with the text both in detail and as a whole. This gives the collection no special authority, a translator’s views on a work being as debatable as anyone else’s. It simply explains the essays’ character. No suppression of the first-person pronoun can hide their personal nature.

To a degree, the collection resembles a preliminary sketch for a consecutively organized book. Although edited to fit together as well as possible, these separately written essays remain imperfectly integrated and still overlap at times. They cover topics that are important and worthwhile for any reader of the tale, but they also neglect matters that deserved acknowledgment or fuller treatment. However, passing time and changed circumstances now discourage any thought of developing the sketch further. If the essays sometimes contest the views of others, such is the nature of reading and understanding. Diversity of opinion on *The Tale of Genji* has a long history and is inevitable.

¹ In their order here, “I Am I’: Genji and Murasaki,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 54:4 (Winter 1999); “The Possession of Ukifune,” *Asiatica Venetiana* 5 (2000, published May 2002); “Rivalry, Triumph, Folly, Revenge: A Plot Line through *The Tale of Genji*,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 29:2 (Summer 2003); “Sagoromo and Hamamatsu on Genji: Eleventh-Century Tales as Commentary on *Genji monogatari*,” *Nichibunken Japan Review* 18 (2006); “Dansei no imēji o ou josei no bēru” (“Feminine Veils over Visions of the Male”), in Haruo Shirane, ed., *Kaigai ni okeru Genji monogatari* (Kōza Genji monogatari kenkyū 11), Benseisha, 2008.