

image
not
available

Meida Guide 1994, Kubu, Harmony, London Community Resource Centre, London Community Resource Centre, 1994, 0969837518, 9780969837510, . .

DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)

, , , , , . .

Community health services‍ Directories‍ England--London Fund raising‍ Great Britain Health education‍ History‍ Medical care‍ Nonprofit organizations‍ Nonprofit organizations--Finance‍ Ontario, Southwestern‍ Ontario--London Periodicals‍ Public health--Citizen participation‍ Publicity‍ Social service--Societies, etc.‍ Social workers‍

Murasaki Shikibu (ç´« â¼•éf”, English: Lady Murasaki) (c. 978 â€“ c. 1014 or 1025) was a Japanese novelist, poet and lady-in-waiting at the Imperial court during the Heian period. She is best known as the author of *The Tale of Genji*, written in Japanese between about 1000 and 1012. Murasaki Shikibu is a nickname; her real name is unknown, but she may have been Fujiwara Takako, who was mentioned in a 1007 court diary as an imperial lady-in-waiting.

Heian women were traditionally excluded from learning Chinese, the written language of government, but Murasaki, raised in her erudite father's household, showed a precocious aptitude for the Chinese classics and managed to acquire fluency. She married in her mid-to late twenties and gave birth to a daughter before her husband died, two years after they were married. It is uncertain when she began to write *The Tale of Genji*, but it was probably while she was married or shortly after she was widowed. In about 1005, Murasaki was invited to serve as a lady-in-waiting to Empress ShÅ•shi at the Imperial court, probably because of her reputation as a writer. She continued to write during her service, adding scenes from court life to her work. After five or six years, she left court and retired with ShÅ•shi to the Lake Biwa region. Scholars differ on the year of her death; although most agree on 1014, others have suggested she was alive in 1025.

Murasaki wrote *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, a volume of poetry, and "*The Tale of Genji*". Within a decade of its completion, *Genji* was distributed throughout the provinces; within a century it was recognized as a classic of Japanese literature and had become a subject of scholarly criticism. Early in the 20th century her work was translated; a six-volume English translation was completed in 1933. Scholars continue to recognize the importance of her work, which reflects Heian court society at its peak. Since the 13th century her works have been illustrated by Japanese artists and well-known ukiyo-e woodblock masters.

Murasaki Shikibu was born c. 973[1] in Heian-kyÅ•, Japan, into the northern Fujiwara clan descending from Fujiwara no Yoshifusa, the first 9th-century Fujiwara regent.[2] The Fujiwara clan dominated court politics until the end of the 11th century through strategic marriages of Fujiwara daughters into the imperial family and the use of regencies. In the late 10th century and early 11th

century, Fujiwara no Michinaga arranged his four daughters into marriages with emperors, giving him unprecedented power.[3] Murasaki's great-grandfather, Fujiwara no Kanesuke, had been in the top tier of the aristocracy, but her branch of the family gradually lost power and by the time of Murasaki's birth was at the middle to lower ranks of the Heian aristocracy—the level of provincial governors.[4] The lower ranks of the nobility were typically posted away from court to undesirable positions in the provinces, exiled from the centralized power and court in Kyoto.[5]

Despite the loss of status, the family had a reputation among the literati through Murasaki's paternal great-grandfather and grandfather, both of whom were well-known poets. Her great-grandfather, Fujiwara no Kanesuke, had fifty-six poems included in thirteen of the Twenty-one Imperial Anthologies,[6] the Collections of Thirty-six Poets and the Yamato Monogatari (Tales of Yamato).[7] Her great-grandfather and grandfather both had been friendly with Ki no Tsurayuki, who became notable for popularizing verse written in Japanese.[5] Her father, Fujiwara no Tametoki, attended the State Academy (Daigaku-ryō)[8] and became a well-respected scholar of Chinese classics and poetry; his own verse was anthologized.[9] He entered public service around 968 as a minor official and was given a governorship in 996. He stayed in service until about 1018.[5][10] Murasaki's mother was descended from the same branch of northern Fujiwara as Tametoki. The couple had three children, a son and two daughters.[9]

The names of women were not recorded in the Heian era. Murasaki's real name is not known; as was customary for women of the period, she went by a nickname, Murasaki Shikibu. Women took nicknames associated with a male relative: "Shikibu" refers to (Shikibu-shō), the Ministry of Ceremonials where her father was a functionary; "Murasaki" may be derived from the color violet associated with wisteria, the meaning of the word fuji, although it is more likely that "Murasaki" was a court nickname. Michinaga mentions the names of a few ladies-in-waiting in a 1007 diary entry; one, Fujiwara Takako (Kyōshi), may be Murasaki's real name.[7][11]

In Heian-era Japan, husbands and wives kept separate households; children were raised with their mothers, although the patrilineal system was still followed.[12] Murasaki was unconventional because she lived in her father's household, most likely on Teramachi Street in Kyoto, with her younger brother Nobunori. Their mother died, perhaps in childbirth, when the children were quite young. Murasaki had at least three half-siblings raised with their mothers; she was very close to one sister who died in her twenties.[13][14][15]

Murasaki was born at a period when Japan was becoming more isolated, after missions to China had ended and a stronger national culture was emerging.[16] In the 9th and 10th centuries, Japanese gradually became a written language through the development of kana, a syllabary based on abbreviations of Chinese characters. In Murasaki's lifetime men continued to write in Chinese, the language of government, but kana became the written language of noblewomen, setting the foundation for unique forms of Japanese literature.[17]

Chinese was taught to Murasaki's brother as preparation for a career in government, and during her childhood, living in her father's household, she learned and became proficient in classical Chinese.[8] In her diary she wrote, "When my brother ... was a young boy learning the Chinese classics, I was in the habit of listening to him and I became unusually proficient at understanding those passages that he found too difficult to understand and memorize. Father, a most learned man, was always regretting the fact: 'Just my luck,' he would say, 'What a pity she was not born a man!'"[18] With her brother she studied Chinese literature, and she probably also received instruction in more traditional subjects such as music, calligraphy and Japanese poetry.[13] Murasaki's education was unorthodox. Louis Perez explains in *The History of Japan* that "Women ... were thought to be incapable of real intelligence and therefore were not educated in Chinese." [19] Murasaki was aware that others saw her as "pretentious, awkward, difficult to approach, prickly, too fond of her tales, haughty, prone to versifying, disdainful, cantankerous and scornful".[20] Asian literature scholar Thomas Inge believes she had "a forceful personality that seldom won her friends." [8]

Aristocratic Heian women lived restricted and secluded lives, allowed only to speak to men when

they were close relatives or household members. Murasaki's autobiographical poetry shows that she socialized with women but had limited contact with men other than her father and brother; she often exchanged poetry with women but never with men.[13] Unlike most noblewomen of her status, she did not marry on reaching puberty; instead she stayed in her father's household until her mid-twenties or perhaps even to her early thirties.[13][21]

In 996 when her father was posted to a four-year governorship in Echizen Province, Murasaki went with him, although it was uncommon for a noblewoman of the period to travel such a distance on a trip that could take as long as five days.[22] She returned to Kyoto, probably in 998, to marry her father's friend Fujiwara no Nobutaka (c. 950 – c. 1001), a much older second cousin.[5][13] Descended from the same branch of the Fujiwara clan, he was a court functionary and bureaucrat at the Ministry of Ceremonials, with a reputation for dressing extravagantly and as a talented dancer.[22] In his late forties at the time of their marriage, he had multiple households with an unknown number of wives and offspring.[7] Gregarious and well known at court, he was involved in numerous romantic relationships that may have continued after his marriage to Murasaki.[13] As was customary, she would have remained in her father's household where her husband would have visited her.[7] Nobutaka had been granted more than one governorship, and by the time of his marriage to Murasaki he was probably quite wealthy. Accounts of their marriage vary: Richard Bowring writes that the marriage was happy, but Japanese literature scholar Haruo Shirane sees indications in her poems that she resented her husband.[5][13]

The couple's daughter, Kenshi (Kataiko), was born in 999. Two years later Nobutaka died during a cholera epidemic.[13] As a married woman Murasaki would have had servants to run the household and care for her daughter, giving her ample leisure time. She enjoyed reading and had access to romances (monogatari) such as *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* and the *Tales of Ise*. [22] Scholars believe she may have started writing *The Tale of Genji* before her husband's death; it is known she was writing after she was widowed, perhaps in a state of grief.[2][5] In her diary she describes her feelings after her husband's death: "I felt depressed and confused. For some years I had existed from day to day in listless fashion ... doing little more than registering the passage of time The thought of my continuing loneliness was quite unbearable".[23]

According to legend, Murasaki retreated to Ishiyama-dera at Lake Biwa, where she was inspired to write *The Tale of Genji* on an August night while looking at the moon. Although scholars dismiss the factual basis of the story of her retreat, Japanese artists often depicted her at Ishiyama Temple staring at the moon for inspiration.[14] She may have been commissioned to write the story and may have known an exiled courtier in a similar position to her hero Prince Genji.[24] Murasaki would have distributed newly written chapters of *Genji* to friends who in turn would have re-copied them and passed them on. By this practice the story became known and she gained a reputation as an author.[25]

In her early to mid-thirties, she became a lady-in-waiting, nyōbō, at court, most likely because of her reputation as an author.[2][25] Chieko Mulhern writes in *Japanese Women Writers*, a Biocritical Sourcebook that scholars have wondered why Murasaki made such a move at a comparatively late period in her life. Her diary evidences that she exchanged poetry with Michinaga after her husband's death, leading to speculation that the two may have been lovers. Bowring sees no evidence that she was brought to court as Michinaga's concubine, although he did bring her to court without following official channels. Mulhern thinks Michinaga wanted to have Murasaki at court to educate his daughter Shōshi.[26]

Heian culture and court life reached a peak early in the 11th century.[3] The population of Kyoto grew to around 100,000 as the nobility became increasingly isolated at the Heian Palace in government posts and court service.[27] Courtiers became overly refined with little to do, insulated from reality, preoccupied with the minutiae of court life, turning to artistic endeavors.[3][27] Emotions were commonly expressed through the artistic use of textiles, fragrances, calligraphy, colored paper, poetry, and layering of clothing in pleasing color combinations—according to mood and season. Those who showed an inability to follow conventional aesthetics quickly lost popularity, particularly at court.[19] Popular pastimes for Heian noblewomen—“who adhered to rigid fashions of

floor-length hair, whitened skin and blackened teeth” included having love affairs, writing poetry and keeping diaries. The literature that Heian court women wrote is recognized as some of the earliest and among the best literature written in the Japanese canon.[3][27]

When in 995 Michinaga's two brothers Fujiwara no Michitaka and Fujiwara no Michikane died leaving the regency vacant, Michinaga quickly won a power struggle against his nephew Fujiwara no Korechika (brother to Teishi, Emperor Ichijū's wife), and, aided by his sister Senshi, he assumed power. Teishi had supported her brother Korechika, who was later discredited and banished from court, causing her to lose power.[28] Four years later Michinaga sent Shōshi, his eldest daughter, to Emperor Ichijū's harem when she was about 12.[29] A year after placing Shōshi in the imperial harem, in an effort to undermine Teishi's influence and increase Shōshi's standing, Michinaga had her named Empress although Teishi already held the title. As historian Donald Shively explains, "Michinaga shocked even his admirers by arranging for the unprecedented appointment of Teishi (or Sadako) and Shōshi as concurrent empresses of the same emperor, Teishi holding the usual title of "Lustrous Heir-bearer" *kōgō* and Shōshi that of "Inner Palatine" (*chūgō*), a toponymically derived equivalent coined for the occasion".[28] About five years later, Michinaga brought Murasaki to Shōshi's court, in a position that Bowring describes as a companion-tutor.[30]

Heian Imperial court life was immensely fashionable, but also dissolute. Court women lived in seclusion, were known by nicknames and, through strategic marriages, were used to gain political power. Despite their seclusion, some women wielded considerable influence, often achieved through competitive salons, dependent on the quality of the attendants.[31] Ichijū's mother and Michinaga's sister, Senshi, had an influential salon, and Michinaga probably wanted Shōshi to surround herself with skilled women such as Murasaki to build a rival salon.[25]

Shōshi was 16 to 19 when Murasaki joined her court.[32] According to Arthur Waley, Shōshi was a serious-minded young lady, whose living arrangements were divided between her father's household and her court at the Imperial Palace.[33] She gathered around her talented women writers such as Izumi Shikibu and Akazome Emon—the author of an early vernacular history, *The Tale of Flowering Fortunes*. [34] The rivalry that existed among the women is evident in Murasaki's diary, where she wrote disparagingly of Izumi: "Izumi Shikibu is an amusing letter-writer; but there is something not very satisfactory about her. She has a gift for dashing off informal compositions in a careless running-hand; but in poetry she needs either an interesting subject or some classic model to imitate. Indeed it does not seem to me that in herself she is really a poet at all." [35]

Sei Shōnagon, author of the *The Pillow Book*, had been in service as lady-in-waiting to Teishi when Shōshi came to court; it is possible that Murasaki was invited to Shōshi's court as a rival to Shōnagon. Teishi died in 1001, before Murasaki entered service with Shōshi, so the two writers were not there concurrently, but Murasaki, who wrote about Shōnagon in her diary, certainly knew of her, and to an extent was influenced by her.[36] Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book* may have been commissioned as a type of propaganda to highlight Teishi's court, known for its educated ladies-in-waiting. Japanese literature scholar Joshua Mostow believes Michinaga provided Murasaki to Shōshi as an equally or better educated woman, so as to showcase Shōshi's court in a similar manner.[37]

The two writers had different temperaments: Shōnagon was witty, clever, and outspoken; Murasaki was withdrawn and sensitive. Entries in Murasaki's diary show that the two may not have been on good terms. Murasaki wrote, "Sei Shōnagon ... was dreadfully conceited. She thought herself so clever, littered her writing with Chinese characters, [which] left a great deal to be desired." [38] Keene thinks that Murasaki's impression of Shōnagon could have been influenced by Shōshi and the women at her court because Shōnagon served Shōshi's rival empress. Furthermore, he believes Murasaki was brought to court to write *Genji* in response to Shōnagon's popular *Pillow Book*. [36] Murasaki contrasted herself to Shōnagon in a variety of ways. She denigrated the pillow book genre and, unlike Shōnagon who flaunted her knowledge of Chinese, Murasaki pretended to not know the language.[37]

Although the popularity of the Chinese language diminished in the late Heian era, Chinese ballads

continued to be popular, including those written by Bai Juyi. Murasaki taught Chinese to ShÅ•shi who was interested in Chinese art and Juyi's ballads. Upon becoming Empress, ShÅ•shi installed screens decorated with Chinese script, causing outrage because written Chinese was considered the language of men, far removed from the women's quarters.[39] The study of Chinese was thought to be unladylike and went against the notion that only men should have access to the literature. Women were supposed to read and write only in Japanese, which separated them through language from government and the power structure. Murasaki, with her unconventional classical Chinese education, was one of the few women available to teach ShÅ•shi classical Chinese.[40] Bowring writes it was "almost subversive" that Murasaki knew Chinese and taught the language to ShÅ•shi.[41] Murasaki, who was reticent about her Chinese education, held the lessons between the two women in secret, writing in her diary, "Since last summer ... very secretly, in odd moments when there happened to be no one about, I have been reading with Her Majesty ... There has of course been no question of formal lessons ... I have thought it best to say nothing about the matter to anybody." [42]

Murasaki most likely earned her second nickname, "Our Lady of the Chronicles" (Nihongi no tsubone), for teaching ShÅ•shi Chinese literature.[25] A lady-in-waiting who disliked Murasaki accused her of flaunting her knowledge of Chinese and began calling her "Our Lady of the Chronicles" "an allusion to the Chronicles of Japan" after an incident in which chapters from *Genji* were read aloud to the Emperor and his courtiers, one of whom remarked that the author showed a high level of education. Murasaki wrote in her diary, "How utterly ridiculous! Would I, who hesitate to reveal my learning to my women at home, ever think of doing so at court?" [43] Although meant to be insulting, Mulhern believes Murasaki was probably flattered by the nickname.[25]

The attitude toward the Chinese language was contradictory. In Teishi's court, Chinese had been flaunted and considered a symbol of imperial rule and superiority. Yet, in ShÅ•shi's salon there was a great deal of hostility towards the language "perhaps owing to political expedience during a period when Chinese began to be rejected in favor of Japanese" even though ShÅ•shi herself was a student of the language. The hostility may have affected Murasaki and her opinion of the court, and forced her to hide her knowledge of Chinese. Unlike ShÅ•nagon, who was both ostentatious and flirtatious, as well as outspoken about her knowledge of Chinese, Murasaki seems to have been humble, an attitude which possibly impressed Michinaga. Although Murasaki used Chinese and incorporated it in her writing, she publicly rejected the language, a commendable attitude during a period of burgeoning Japanese culture.[44]

Murasaki seems to have been unhappy with court life and was withdrawn and somber. No surviving records show that she entered poetry competitions; she appears to have exchanged few poems or letters with other women during her service.[5] In general, unlike Sei ShÅ•nagon, Murasaki gives the impression in her diary that she disliked court life, the other ladies-in-waiting, and the drunken revelry. She did, however, become close friends with a lady-in-waiting named Lady SaishÅ•, and she wrote of the winters that she enjoyed, "I love to see the snow here". [45][46]

According to Waley, Murasaki may not have been unhappy with court life in general but bored in ShÅ•shi's court. He speculates she would have preferred to serve with the Lady Senshi, whose household seems to have been less strict and more light-hearted. In her diary, Murasaki wrote about ShÅ•shi's court, "[she] has gathered round her a number of very worthy young ladies ... Her Majesty is beginning to acquire more experience of life, and no longer judges others by the same rigid standards as before; but meanwhile her Court has gained a reputation for extreme dullness". [47]

Murasaki disliked the men at court whom she thought to be drunken and stupid. However, some scholars, such as Waley, are certain she was involved romantically with Michinaga. At the least, Michinaga pursued her and pressured her strongly, and her flirtation with him is recorded in her diary as late as 1010. Yet, she wrote to him in a poem, "You have neither read my book, nor won my love." [48] In her diary she records having to avoid advances from Michinaga "one night he snuck into her room, stealing a newly written chapter of *Genji*." [49] However, Michinaga's patronage was essential if she was to continue writing.[50] Murasaki described his daughter's court activities: the lavish ceremonies, the complicated courtships, the "complexities of the marriage system", [21] and in

elaborate detail, the birth of ShÅ•shi's two sons.[49]

It is likely that Murasaki enjoyed writing in solitude.[49] She believed she did not fit well with the general atmosphere of the court, writing of herself: "I am wrapped up in the study of ancient stories ... living all the time in a poetical world of my own scarcely realizing the existence of other people But when they get to know me, they find to their extreme surprise that I am kind and gentle".[51] Inge says that she was too outspoken to make friends at court, and Mulhern thinks Murasaki's court life was comparatively quiet compared to other court poets.[8][25] Mulhern speculates that her remarks about Izumi were not so much directed at Izumi's poetry but at her behavior, lack of morality and her court liaisons, of which Murasaki disapproved.[34]

Rank was important in Heian court society and Murasaki would not have felt herself to have much, if anything, in common with the higher ranked and more powerful Fujiwaras.[52] In her diary, she wrote of her life at court: "I realized that my branch of the family was a very humble one; but the thought seldom troubled me, and I was in those days far indeed from the painful consciousness of inferiority which makes life at Court a continual torment to me."[53] A court position would have increased her social standing, but more importantly she gained a greater experience to write about.[25] Court life, as she experienced it, is well reflected in the chapters of Genji written after she joined ShÅ•shi. Her nickname, Murasaki, was most probably given at a court dinner in an incident she recorded in her diary: in c. 1008 the well-known court poet Fujiwara no KintÅ• inquired after the "Young Murasaki"â€”an allusion to the character named Murasaki in Genjiâ€”which would have been considered a compliment from a male court poet to a female author.[25]

When Emperor IchijÅ• died in 1011, ShÅ•shi retired from the Imperial Palace to live in a Fujiwara mansion in Biwa, most likely accompanied by Murasaki, who is recorded as being there with ShÅ•shi in 1013.[50] George Aston explains that when Murasaki retired from court she was again associated with Ishiyama-dera: "To this beautiful spot, it is said, Murasaki no Shikibu retired from court life to devote the remainder of her days to literature and religion. There are sceptics, however, MotoÅ•ri being one, who refuse to believe this story, pointing out ... that it is irreconcilable with known facts. On the other hand, the very chamber in the temple where the Genji was written is shownâ€”with the ink-slab which the author used, and a Buddhist Sutra in her handwriting, which, if they do not satisfy the critic, still are sufficient to carry conviction to the minds of ordinary visitors to the temple."[54]

<http://eduln.org/13143.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/3830.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/4743.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/10276.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/17521.pdf>

<http://eduln.org/14002.pdf>