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# Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

## The Tale of Genji: Kiritsubo (1/9)

At the Court of an Emperor (he lived it matters not when) there was among the many gentlewomen of the Wardrobe and Chamber one, who though she was not of very high rank was favoured far beyond all the rest; so that the great ladies of the Palace, each of whom had secretly hoped that she herself would be chosen, looked with scorn and hatred upon the upstart who had dispelled their dreams. Still less were her former companions, the minor ladies of the Wardrobe, content to see her raised so far above them. Thus her position at Court, preponderant though it was, exposed her to constant jealousy and ill will; and soon, worn out with petty vexations, she fell into a decline, growing very melancholy and retiring frequently to her home. But the Emperor, so far from wearying of her now that she was no longer well or gay, grew every day more tender, and paid not the smallest heed to those who reproved him, till his conduct became the talk of all the land; and even his own barons and courtiers began to look askance at an attachment so ill-advised. They whispered among themselves that in the Land Beyond the Sea such happenings had led to {18}riot and disaster. The people of the country did indeed soon have many grievances to show: and some likened her to Yang Kuei-fei, the mistress of Ming Huang. Yet, for all this

discontent, so great was the sheltering power of her master's love that none dared openly molest her. Her father, who had been a Councillor, was dead. Her mother, who never forgot that the father was in his day a man of some consequence, managed despite all difficulties to give her as good an upbringing as generally falls to the lot of young ladies whose parents are alive and at the height of fortune. It would have helped matters greatly if there had been some influential guardian to busy himself on the child's behalf. Unfortunately, the mother was entirely alone in the world and sometimes, when troubles came, she felt very bitterly the lack of anyone to whom she could turn for comfort and advice. But to return to the daughter. In due time she bore him a little Prince who, perhaps because in some previous life a close bond had joined them, turned out as fine and likely a man-child as well might be in all the land. The Emperor could hardly contain himself during the days of waiting. But when, at the earliest possible moment, the child was presented at Court, he saw that rumour had not exaggerated its beauty. His eldest born prince was the son of Lady Kōkiden, the daughter of the Minister of the Right, and this child was treated by all with the respect due to an undoubted Heir Apparent. But he was not so fine a child as the new prince; moreover the Emperor's great affection for the new child's mother made him feel the boy to be in a peculiar sense his own possession. Unfortunately she was not of the same rank as the courtiers who waited upon him in the Upper Palace, so

that despite his love for her, and though she wore all the airs of a great lady, it was not without considerable qualms that he now made it his practice to have her by him not only when there was to be some entertainment, but even when any business of importance was afoot. Sometimes indeed he would keep her when he woke in the morning, not letting her go back to her lodging, so that willy-nilly she acted the part of a Lady-in-Perpetual-Attendance.

Seeing all this, Lady Kōkiden began to fear that the new prince, for whom the Emperor seemed to have so marked a preference, would if she did not take care soon be promoted to the Eastern Palace. But she had, after all, priority over her rival; the Emperor had loved her devotedly and she had born him princes. It was even now chiefly the fear of her reproaches that made him uneasy about his new way of life. Thus, though his mistress could be sure of his protection, there were many who sought to humiliate her, and she felt so weak in herself that it seemed to her at last as though all the honours heaped upon her had brought with them terror rather than joy.

Her lodging was in the wing called Kiritsubo. It was but natural that the many ladies whose doors she had to pass on her repeated journeys to the Emperor's room should have grown exasperated; and sometimes, when these comings and goings became frequent beyond measure, it would happen that on bridges and in corridors, here or there along the way that she must go, strange tricks were played to frighten her or

unpleasant things were left lying about which spoiled the dresses of the ladies who accompanied her. Once indeed some one locked the door of a portico, so that the poor thing wandered this way and that for a great while in sore distress. So many were the miseries into which this state of affairs now daily brought her that the Emperor could no longer endure to witness her vexations and moved her to the Kōrōden. In order to make room for her he was obliged to shift the Chief Lady of the Wardrobe to lodgings outside. So far from improving matters he had merely procured her a new and most embittered enemy!

The young prince was now three years old. The Putting on of the Trousers was performed with as much ceremony as in the case of the Heir Apparent.

Marvellous gifts flowed from the Imperial Treasury and Tribute House. This too incurred the censure of many, but brought no enmity to the child himself; for his growing beauty and the charm of his disposition were a wonder and delight to all who met him. Indeed many persons of ripe experience confessed themselves astounded that such a creature should actually have been born in these latter and degenerate days.

In the summer of that year the lady became very downcast. She repeatedly asked for leave to go to her home, but it was not granted. For a year she continued in the same state. The Emperor to all her entreaties answered only 'Try for a little while longer.' But she was getting worse every day, and when for five or six days she had been growing steadily weaker her mother sent

to the Palace a tearful plea for her release. Fearing even now that her enemies might contrive to put some unimaginable shame upon her, the sick lady left her son behind and prepared to quit the Palace in secret. The Emperor knew that the time had come when, little as he liked it, he must let her go. But that she should slip away without a word of farewell was more than he could bear, and he hastened to her side. He found her still charming and beautiful, but her face very thin and wan. She looked at him tenderly, saying nothing. Was she alive? So faint was the dwindling spark that she scarcely seemed so. Suddenly forgetting all that had happened and all that was to come, he called her by a hundred pretty names and weeping showered upon her a thousand caresses; but she made no answer. For sounds and sights reached her but faintly, and she seemed dazed, as one that scarcely remembered she lay upon a bed. Seeing her thus he knew not what to do. In great trouble and perplexity he sent for a hand litter. But when they would have laid her in it, he forbade them, saying 'There was an oath between us that neither should go alone upon the road that all at last must tread. How can I now let her go from me?' The lady heard him and 'At last!' she said; 'Though that desired at last be come, because I go alone how gladly would I live!'

Thus with faint voice and failing breath she whispered. But though she had found strength to speak, each word was uttered with great toil and pain. Come what might, the Emperor would have watched by her till the end, but that the priests who were to read the Intercession

had already been dispatched to her home. She must be brought there before nightfall, and at last he forced himself to let the bearers carry her away. He tried to sleep but felt stifled and could not close his eyes. All night long messengers were coming and going between her home and the Palace. From the first they brought no good news, and soon after midnight announced that this time on arriving at the house they had heard a noise of wailing and lamentation, and learned from those within that the lady had just breathed her last. The Emperor lay motionless as though he had not understood.

Though his father was so fond of his company, it was thought better after this event that the Prince should go away from the Palace. He did not understand what had happened, but seeing the servants all wringing their hands and the Emperor himself continually weeping, he felt that it must have been something very terrible. He knew that even quite ordinary separations made people unhappy; but here was such a dismal wailing and lamenting as he had never seen before, and he concluded that this must be some very extraordinary kind of parting.

When the time came for the funeral to begin, the girl's mother cried out that the smoke of her own body would be seen rising beside the smoke of her child's bier. She rode in the same coach with the Court ladies who had come to the funeral. The ceremony took place at Atago and was celebrated with great splendour. So overpowering was the mother's affection that so long as she looked on the body she still thought of her child

as alive. It was only when they lighted the pyre she suddenly realized that what lay upon it was a corpse. Then, though she tried to speak sensibly, she reeled and almost fell from the coach, and those with her turned to one another and said 'At last she knows.'

A herald came from the palace and read a proclamation which promoted the dead lady to the Third Rank. The reading of this long proclamation by the bier was a sad business. The Emperor repented bitterly that he had not long ago made her a Lady-in-Waiting, and that was why he now raised her rank by one degree. There were many who grudged her even this honour; but some less stubborn began now to recall that she had indeed been a lady of uncommon beauty; and others, that she had very gentle and pleasing manners; while some went so far as to say it was a shame that anybody should have disliked so sweet a lady, and that if she had not been singled out unfairly from the rest, no one would have said a word against her.

The seven weeks of mourning were, by the Emperor's order, minutely observed. Time passed, but he still lived in rigid seclusion from the ladies of the Court. The servants who waited upon him had a sad life, for he wept almost without ceasing both day and night.

Kōkiden and the other great ladies were still relentless, and went about saying 'it looked as though the Emperor would be no less foolishly obsessed by her memory than he had been by her person.' He did indeed sometimes see Kōkiden's son, the first-born prince. But this only made him long the more to see the dead lady's



child, and he was always sending trusted servants, such as his own old nurse, to report to him upon the boy's progress. The time of the autumn equinox had come. Already the touch of the evening air was cold upon the skin. So many memories crowded upon him that he sent a girl, the daughter of his quiver-bearer, with a letter to the dead lady's house. It was beautiful moonlit weather, and after he had despatched the messenger he lingered for a while gazing out into the night. It was at such times as this that he had been wont to call for music. He remembered how her words, lightly whispered, had blended with those strangely fashioned harmonies, remembered how all was strange, her face, her air, her form. He thought of the poem which says that 'real things in the darkness seem no realer than dreams' and he longed for even so dim a substance as the dream-life of those nights.

The messenger had reached the gates of the house. She pushed them back and a strange sight met her eyes. The old lady had for long been a widow and the whole charge of keeping the domain in repair had fallen upon her daughter. But since her death the mother, sunk in age and despair, had done nothing to the place, and everywhere the weeds grew high; and to all this desolation was added the wildness of the autumn gale. Great clumps of mugwort grew so thick that only the moonlight could penetrate them. The messenger alighted at the entrance of the house. At first the mother could find no words with which to greet her, but soon she said: 'Alas, I have lingered too long in the world! I cannot bear to think that so fine a messenger as you

have pressed your way through the dewy thickets that bar the road to my house,' and she burst into uncontrollable weeping. Then the quiver-bearer's daughter said 'One of the Palace maids who came here, told his Majesty that her heart had been torn with pity at what she saw. And I, Madam, am in like case.' Then after a little hesitation she repeated the Emperor's message: "For a while I searched in the darkness of my mind, groping for an exit from my dream; but after long pondering I can find no way to wake. There is none here to counsel me. Will you not come to me secretly? It is not well that the young prince should spend his days in so desolate and sad a place. Let him come too!" This he said and much else, but confusedly and with many sighs; and I, seeing that the struggle to hide his grief from me was costing him dear, hurried away from the Palace without hearing all. But here is a letter that he sent.'

'My sight is dim' said the mother. 'Let me hold His letter to the light.' The letter said:

'I had thought that after a while there might be some blurring, some slight effacement. But no. As days and months go by, the more senseless, the more unendurable becomes my life. I am continually thinking of the child, wondering how he fares. I had hoped that his mother and I together would watch over his upbringing. Will you not take her place in this, and bring him to me as a memory of the past?' Such was the letter, and many instructions were added to it together with a poem which said 'At the sound of the wind that binds the

cold dew on Takagi moor, my heart goes out to the tender lilac stems.'

It was of the young prince that he spoke in symbol; but she did not read the letter to the end. At last the mother said 'Though I know that long life means only bitterness, I have stayed so long in the world that even before the Pine Tree of Takasago I should hide my head in shame. How then should I find courage to go hither and thither in the great Palace of a Hundred Towers? Though the august summons should call me time and again, myself I could not obey. But the young prince (whether he may have heard the august wish I know not) is impatient to return, and, what is small wonder, seems very downcast in this place. Tell his Majesty this, and whatever else of my thoughts you have here learnt from me. For a little child this house is indeed a sorry place....' 'They say that the child is asleep' the quiver-bearer's daughter answered. 'I should like to have seen him and told the Emperor how he looks; but I am awaited at the Palace and it must be late.'

She was hastening away, but the mother: 'Since even those who wander in the darkness of their own black thoughts can gain by converse a momentary beam to guide their steps, I pray you sometimes to visit me of your own accord and when you are at leisure. In years past it was at times of joy and triumph that you came to this house, and now this is the news you bring!

Foolish are they indeed who trust to fortune! From the time she was born until his death, her father, who knew his own mind, would have it that she must go to Court and charged me again and again not to disappoint his

wishes if he were to die. And so, though I thought that the lack of a guardian would bring her into many difficulties, I was determined to carry out his desire. At Court she found that favours only too great were to be hers, and all the while must needs endure in secrecy the tokens of inhuman malice; till hatred had heaped upon her so heavy a load of cares that she died as it were murdered. Indeed, the love that in His wisdom He deigned to show her (or so sometimes it seems to me in the uncomprehending darkness of my heart) was crueller than indifference.'

So she spoke, till tears would let her speak no more; and now the night had come.

'All this' the girl answered 'He himself has said; and further: "That thus against My will and judgment I yielded helplessly to a passion so reckless that it caused men's eyes to blink was perhaps decreed for the very reason that our time was fated to be so short; it was the wild and vehement passion of those who are marked down for instant separation. And though I had vowed that none should suffer because of my love, yet in the end she bore upon her shoulders the heavy hatred of many who thought that for her sake they had been wronged."

'So again and again have I heard the Emperor speak with tears. But now the night is far spent and I must carry my message to the Palace before day comes.'

So she, weeping too, spoke as she hurried away. But the sinking moon was shining in a cloudless sky, and in the grass-clumps that shivered in the cold wind, bell-crickets tinkled their compelling cry. It was hard to

leave these grass-clumps, and the quiver-bearer's daughter, loth to ride away, recited the poem which says 'Ceaseless as the interminable voices of the bell-cricket, all night till dawn my tears flow.' The mother answered 'Upon the thickets that teem with myriad insect voices falls the dew of a Cloud Dweller's tears'; for the people of the Court are called dwellers above the clouds. Then she gave the messenger a sash, a comb and other things that the dead lady had left in her keeping,—gifts from the Emperor which now, since their use was gone, she sent back to him as mementoes of the past. The nurse-maids who had come with the boy were depressed not so much at their mistress's death as at being suddenly deprived of the daily sights and sensations of the Palace. They begged to go back at once. But the mother was determined not to go herself, knowing that she would cut too forlorn a figure. On the other hand if she parted with the boy, she would be daily in great anxiety about him. That was why she did not immediately either go with him herself or send him to the Palace.

The quiver-bearer's daughter found the Emperor still awake. He was, upon pretext of visiting the flower-pots in front of the Palace which were then in full bloom, waiting for her out of doors, while four or five trusted ladies conversed with him.

At this time it was his wont to examine morning and evening a picture of The Everlasting Wrong, the text written by Teiji no In, with poems by Ise and Tsurayuki, both in Yamato speech, and in that of the men beyond

the sea, and the story of this poem was the common matter of his talk.

Now he turned to the messenger and asked eagerly for all her news. And when she had given him a secret and faithful account of the sad place whence she had come, she handed him the mother's letter: 'His Majesty's gracious commands I read with reverence deeper than I can express, but their purport has brought great darkness and confusion to my mind.' All this, together with a poem in which she compared her grandchild to a flower which has lost the tree that sheltered it from the great winds, was so wild and so ill-writ as only to be suffered from the hand of one whose sorrow was as yet unhealed.

Again the Emperor strove for self-possession in the presence of his messenger. But as he pictured to himself the time when the dead lady first came to him, a thousand memories pressed thick about him, and recollection linked to recollection carried him onward, till he shuddered to think how utterly unmarked, unheeded all these hours and days had fled.

At last he said 'I too thought much and with delight how with most profit might be fulfilled the wish that her father the Councillor left behind him; but of that no more. If the young Prince lives occasion may yet be found.... It is for his long life that we must pray.'

He looked at the presents she had brought back and 'Would that like the wizard you had brought a kingfisher-hairpin as token of your visit to the place where her spirit dwells' he cried, and recited the poem: Oh for a master of magic who might go and seek

her, and by a message teach me where her spirit dwells.

For the picture of Kuei-fei, skilful though the painter might be, was but the work of a brush, and had no living fragrance. And though the poet tells us that Kuei-fei's grace was as that of 'the hibiscus of the Royal Lake or the willows of the Wei-yang Palace,' the lady in the picture was all paint and powder and had a simpering Chinesified air.

But when he thought of the lost lady's voice and form, he could find neither in the beauty of flowers nor in the song of birds any fit comparison. Continually he pined that fate should not have allowed them to fulfil the vow which morning and evening was ever talked of between them,—the vow that their lives should be as the twin birds that share a wing, the twin trees that share a bough. The rustling of the wind, the chirping of an insect would cast him into the deepest melancholy; and now Kōkiden, who for a long while had not been admitted to his chamber, must needs sit in the moonlight making music far on into the night! This evidently distressed him in the highest degree and those ladies and courtiers who were with him were equally shocked and distressed on his behalf. But the offending lady was one who stood much upon her dignity and she was determined to behave as though nothing of any consequence had taken place in the Palace.

And now the moon had set. The Emperor thought of the girl's mother in the house amid the thickets and

wondered, making a poem of the thought, with what feelings she had watched the sinking of the autumn moon: 'for even we Men above the Clouds were weeping when it sank.'

He raised the torches high in their sockets and still sat up. But at last he heard voices coming from the Watch House of the Right and knew that the hour of the Bull had struck. Then, lest he should be seen, he went into his chamber. He found he could not sleep and was up before daybreak. But, as though he remembered the words 'he knew not the dawn was at his window' of Ise's poem, he showed little attention to the affairs of his Morning Audience, scarcely touched his dried rice and seemed but dimly aware of the viands on the great Table, so that the carvers and waiting-men groaned to see their Master's plight; and all his servants, both men and women kept on whispering to one another 'What a senseless occupation has ours become!' and supposed that he was obeying some extravagant vow.

Regardless of his subjects' murmurings, he continually allowed his mind to wander from their affairs to his own, so that the scandal of his negligence was now as dangerous to the State as it had been before, and again there began to be whispered references to a certain Emperor of another land. Thus the months and days passed, and in the end the young prince arrived at Court. He had grown up to be a child of unrivalled beauty and the Emperor was delighted with him. In the spring an heir to the Throne was to be proclaimed and the Emperor was sorely tempted to pass over the first-born prince in favour of the young child. But there was



no one at Court to support such a choice and it was unlikely that it would be tolerated by the people; it would indeed bring danger rather than glory to the child. So he carefully concealed from the world that he had any such design, and gained great credit, men saying 'Though he dotes on the boy, there is at least some limit to his folly.' And even the great ladies of the Palace became a little easier in their minds.

The grandmother remained inconsolable, and impatient to set out upon her search for the place where the dead lady's spirit dwelt, she soon expired. Again the Emperor was in great distress; and this time the boy, being now six years old, understood what had happened and wept bitterly. And often he spoke sadly of what he had seen when he was brought to visit the poor dead lady who had for many years been so kind to him.

Henceforward he lived always at the Palace. When he became seven he began to learn his letters, and his quickness was so unusual that his father was amazed. Thinking that now no one would have the heart to be unkind to the child, the Emperor began to take him to the apartments of Kōkiden and the rest, saying to them 'Now that his mother is dead I know that you will be nice to him.' Thus the boy began to penetrate the Royal Curtain. The roughest soldier, the bitterest foeman could not have looked on such a child without a smile, and Kōkiden did not send him away. She had two daughters who were indeed not such fine children as the little prince. He also played with the Court Ladies, who, because he was now very pretty and bashful in

his ways, found endless amusement, as indeed did everyone else, in sharing his games. As for his serious studies, he soon learnt to send the sounds of zithern and flute flying gaily to the clouds. But if I were to tell you of all his accomplishments, you would think that he was soon going to become a bore.

At this time some Koreans came to Court and among them a fortune-teller. Hearing this, the Emperor did not send for them to come to the Palace, because of the law against the admission of foreigners which was made by the Emperor Uda. But in strict secrecy he sent the Prince to the Strangers' quarters. He went under the escort of the Secretary of the Right, who was to introduce him as his own son. The fortune teller was astonished by the boy's lineaments and expressed his surprise by continually nodding his head: 'He has the marks of one who might become a Father of the State, and if this were his fate, he would not stop short at any lesser degree than that of Mighty King and Emperor of all the land. But when I look again—I see that confusion and sorrow would attend his reign. But should he become a great Officer of State and Counsellor of the Realm I see no happy issue, for he would be defying those kingly signs of which I spoke before.'

The Secretary was a most talented, wise and learned scholar, and now began to conduct an interesting conversation with the fortune teller. They exchanged essays and poems, and the fortune-teller made a little speech, saying 'It has been a great pleasure to me on the eve of my departure to meet with a man of

capacities so unusual; and though I regret my departure I shall now take away most agreeable impressions of my visit.' The little prince presented him with a very nice verse of poetry, at which he expressed boundless admiration and offered the boy a number of handsome presents. In return the Emperor sent him a large reward from the Imperial Treasury. This was all kept strictly secret. But somehow or other the Heir Apparent's grandfather, the Minister of the Right, and others of his party got wind of it and became very suspicious. The Emperor then sent for native fortune-tellers and made trial of them, explaining that because of certain signs which he had himself observed he had hitherto refrained from making the boy a prince. With one accord they agreed that he had acted with great prudence and the Emperor determined not to set the child adrift upon the world as a prince without royal standing or influence upon the mother's side. For he thought 'My own power is very insecure. I had best set him to watch on my behalf over the great Officers of State.' Thinking that he had thus agreeably settled the child's future, he set seriously to work upon his education, and saw to it that he should be made perfect in every branch of art and knowledge. He showed such aptitude in all his studies that it seemed a pity he should remain a commoner and as it had been decided that it would arouse suspicion if he were made a prince, the Emperor consulted with certain doctors wise in the lore of the planets and phases of the moon. And they with one accord recommended that he should be made a Member of the Minamoto (or Gen) Clan. So

this was done. As the years went by the Emperor did not forget his lost lady; and though many women were brought to the Palace in the hope that he might take pleasure in them, he turned from them all, believing that there was not in the world any one like her whom he had lost. There was at that time a lady whose beauty was of great repute. She was the fourth daughter of the previous Emperor, and it was said that her mother, the Dowager Empress, had brought her up with unrivalled care. A certain Dame of the Household, who had served the former Emperor, was intimately acquainted with the young Princess, having known her since childhood and still having occasion to observe her from without. 'I have served in three courts' said the Dame 'and in all that time have seen none who could be likened to the departed lady, save the daughter of the Empress Mother. She indeed is a lady of rare beauty.' So she spoke to the Emperor, and he, much wondering what truth there was in it, listened with great attention. The Empress Mother heard of this with great alarm, for she remembered with what open cruelty the sinister Lady Kōkiden had treated her former rival, and though she did not dare speak openly of her fears, she was managing to delay the girl's presentation, when suddenly she died.

The Emperor, hearing that the bereaved Princess was in a very desolate condition, sent word gently telling her that he should henceforward look upon her as though she were one of the Lady Princesses his daughters. Her servants and guardians and her brother, Prince

Hyōbukyō, thought that life in the Palace might distract her and would at least be better than the gloomy desolation of her home, and so they sent her to the Court. She lived in apartments called Fujitsubo (Wistaria Tub) and was known by this name. The Emperor could not deny that she bore an astonishing resemblance to his beloved. She was however of much higher rank, so that everyone was anxious to please her, and, whatever happened, they were prepared to grant her the utmost licence: whereas the dead lady had been imperilled by the Emperor's favour only because the Court was not willing to accept her.

His old love did not now grow dimmer, and though he sometimes found solace and distraction in shifting his thoughts from the lady who had died to the lady who was so much like her, yet life remained for him a sad business.

Genji ('he of the Minamoto clan'), as he was now called, was constantly at the Emperor's side. He was soon quite at his ease with the common run of Ladies in Waiting and Ladies of the Wardrobe, so it was not likely he would be shy with one who was daily summoned to the Emperor's apartments. It was but natural that all these ladies should vie eagerly with one another for the first place in Genji's affections, and there were many whom in various ways he admired very much. But most of them behaved in too grown-up a fashion; only one, the new princess, was pretty and quite young as well, and though she tried to hide from him, it was inevitable that they should often meet. He could not remember his

mother, but the Dame of the Household had told him how very like to her the girl was, and this interested his childish fancy, and he would like to have been her great friend and lived with her always. One day the Emperor said to her 'Do not be unkind to him. He is interested because he has heard that you are so like his mother. Do not think him impertinent, but behave nicely to him. You are indeed so like him in look and features that you might well be his mother.'

And so, young though he was, fleeting beauty took its hold upon his thoughts; he felt his first clear predilection.

Kōkiden had never loved this lady too well, and now her old enmity to Genji sprang up again; her own children were reckoned to be of quite uncommon beauty, but in this they were no match for Genji, who was so lovely a boy that people called him Hikaru Genji or Genji the Shining One; and Princess Fujitsubo, who also had many admirers, was called Princess Glittering Sunshine.

Though it seemed a shame to put so lovely a child into man's dress, he was now twelve years old and the time for his Initiation was come. The Emperor directed the preparations with tireless zeal and insisted upon a magnificence beyond what was prescribed. The Initiation of the Heir Apparent, which had last year been celebrated in the Southern Hall, was not a whit more splendid in its preparations. The ordering of the banquets that were to be given in various quarters, and the work of the Treasurer and Grain Intendant he supervised in person, fearing lest the officials should be

remiss; and in the end all was perfection. The ceremony took place in the eastern wing of the Emperor's own apartments, and the Throne was placed facing towards the east, with the seats of the Initiate to-be and his Sponsor (the Minister of the Left) in front.

Genji arrived at the hour of the Monkey. He looked very handsome with his long childish locks, and the Sponsor, whose duty it had just been to bind them with the purple file, was sorry to think that all this would soon be changed and even the Clerk of the Treasury seemed loath to sever those lovely tresses with the ritual knife. The Emperor, as he watched, remembered for a moment what pride the mother would have taken in the ceremony, but soon drove the weak thought from his mind.

Duly crowned, Genji went to his chamber and changing into man's dress went down into the courtyard and performed the Dance of Homage, which he did with such grace that tears stood in every eye. And now the Emperor, whose grief had of late grown somewhat less insistent, was again overwhelmed by memories of the past.

It had been feared that his delicate features would show to less advantage when he had put aside his childish dress; but on the contrary he looked handsomer than ever.

His sponsor, the Minister of the Left, had an only daughter whose beauty the Heir Apparent had noticed. But now the father began to think he would not encourage that match, but would offer her to Genji. He sounded the Emperor upon this, and found that he

would be very glad to obtain for the boy the advantage of so powerful a connection.

When the courtiers assembled to drink the Love Cup, Genji came and took his place among the other princes. The Minister of the Left came up and whispered something in his ear; but the boy blushed and could think of no reply. A chamberlain now came over to the Minister and brought him a summons to wait upon His Majesty immediately. When he arrived before the Throne, a Lady of the Wardrobe handed to him the Great White Inner Garment and the Maid's Skirt, which were his ritual due as Sponsor to the Prince. Then, when he had made him drink out of the Royal Cup, the Emperor recited a poem in which he prayed that the binding of the purple fillet might symbolize the union of their two houses; and the Minister answered him that nothing should sever this union save the fading of the purple band. Then he descended the long stairs and from the courtyard performed the Grand Obeisance. Here too were shown the horses from the Royal Stables and the hawks from the Royal Falconry, that had been decreed as presents for Genji. At the foot of the stairs the Princes and Courtiers were lined up to receive their bounties, and gifts of every kind were showered upon them. That day the hampers and fruit baskets were distributed in accordance with the Emperor's directions by the learned Secretary of the Right, and boxes of cake and presents lay about so thick that one could scarcely move. Such profusion had not been seen even at the Heir Apparent's Initiation.



That night Genji went to the Minister's house, where his betrothal was celebrated with great splendour. It was thought that the little Prince looked somewhat childish and delicate, but his beauty astonished everyone. Only the bride, who was four years older, regarded him as a mere baby and was rather ashamed of him.



The Emperor still demanded Genji's attendance at the Palace, so he did not set up a house of his own. In his inmost heart he was always thinking how much nicer she was than anyone else, and only wanted to be with people who were like her, but alas no one was the least like her. Everyone seemed to make a great deal of fuss about Princess Aoi, his betrothed; but he could see nothing nice about her. The girl at the Palace now filled all his childish thoughts and this obsession became a misery to him.

Now that he was a 'man' he could no longer frequent the women's quarters as he had been wont to do. But sometimes when an entertainment was a-foot he found comfort in hearing her voice dimly blending with the sound of zithern or flute and felt his grown-up existence to be unendurable. After an absence of five or six days he would occasionally spend two or three at his betrothed's house. His father-in-law attributing this negligence to his extreme youth was not at all perturbed and always received him warmly. Whenever

he came the most interesting and agreeable of the young people of the day were asked to meet him and endless trouble was taken in arranging games to amuse him.

The Shigeisa, one of the rooms which had belonged to his mother, was allotted to him as his official quarters in the Palace, and the servants who had waited on her were now gathered together again and formed his suite. His grandmother's house was falling into decay. The Imperial Office of Works was ordered to repair it. The grouping of the trees and disposition of the surrounding hills had always made the place delightful. Now the basin of the lake was widened and many other improvements were carried out. 'If only I were going to live here with someone whom I liked,' thought Genji sadly.

Some say that the name of Hikaru the Shining One was given to him in admiration by the Korean fortune-teller.