

林文月：源氏物語桐壺與長恨歌

The Tale of Genji and The Song of Enduring Woe

By Lin Wen-yueh

Translated by Diana Yu

This study in literary kinship between an early 9th century Chinese poem and a chapter of the 11th century Japanese classic was written by Prof. Lin Wen-yueh of the National Taiwan University and first published in 中外文學 Chung-Wai Literary Monthly, Taipei, in 1973. A summary of the article was presented as a paper at the Second International Comparative Literature Conference held at Tamkang College in Taipei this year. Prof. Lin's own full Chinese translation of The Tale of Genji has been serializing in the above-mentioned magazine, and its first 12 chapters appeared in book form in 1974.

In the following translation, all quotations from the novel are taken from Arthur Waley's celebrated English version, and the lines from 長恨歌 are those from John Turner's "The Song of Enduring Woe" (see p. 62 of this issue). Decorations in the article are reproduced from illustrations in the Chung-wai Literary Monthly translation.

I

THE GREAT Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji*, the work of the woman writer Murasaki Shikibu of the Heian dynasty, is set in the middle and latter years of the period (A.D. 884-1185). It comprises 54 chapters—Kiritsubo, The Broom-Tree, Utsusemi, Yugao, Waka murasaki, The Saffron-Flower, The Festival of Red Leaves, The Flower Feast, Aoi, The Sacred Tree, The Village of Falling Flowers, Exile at Suma, Akashi, The Flood Gauge, The Palace in the Tangled Woods, A Meeting at the Frontier, The Picture Competition, The Wind in the Pine-Trees, A Wreath of Cloud, Asagao, The Maiden, Tamakatsura, The First Song of the Year, The Butterflies, The Glow-Worm, A Bed of Carnations, The Flares, The Typhoon, The Royal Visit, Blue Trousers, Makibashira, The Spray of Plum-Blossom, Fuji No Uraba, Wakana (Parts I and II), Kashiwagi, The Flute, Suzumushi, Yugiri, The Law, Mirage, Kumogakure, Niou, Kobai, Bamboo River, The Bridge Maiden, At The Foot of the Oak-Tree, Agemaki, Fern-Shoots, The Mistletoe, The Eastern House, Ukifune, The Gossamer-Fly, Writing Practice and The Bridge of Dreams.

What is known as the Former Section, the portion before Mirage, centers around the hero, Prince Hikaru Genji 光源氏, and includes accounts of the glamorous lives of court ladies such as Fujitsubo and Murasaki. Then comes Kumogakure, a chapter with a title but no text. The next three chapters—Niou, Kobai and Bamboo River—bring the book into the Latter Section. From The Bridge Maiden onwards the

story is devoted to the intricate relations between Prince Genji's descendants Kaoru and Niou and the daughters of the Eighth Prince of Uji. The setting also shifts from Heiankyo (today's Kyoto) to Uji, for which reason these last chapters are known as The Ten Chapters of Uji.

II

TWO-THIRDS of the opening chapter, "Kiritsubo" 桐壺, are devoted to an account of the romance between Prince Genji's parents. He was the Emperor Kiritsubo and she was his concubine, a gentlewoman who serves as Koi 更衣 of the Wardrobe and Chamber. The Emperor's affection for his beloved lady and their sorrowful separation are evidently modelled on the love-story of the T'ang Emperor Hsuan Tsung and the Imperial Concubine Yang Kuei-fei as described in Po Chū-i's poem, "The Song of Enduring Woe". This article will make a comparative study of these two pieces of literature and examine the relationship between them.

Roughly speaking, what the "Kiritsubo" owes to "The Song of Enduring Woe" in structure and style can be viewed at two levels: (1) direct adaptation, and (2) indirect derivation. Let us first look at a portion that contains a direct reference.

... his (the Emperor's) own barons and courtiers began to look askance at an attachment so illadvised. They whispered among themselves that in the Land Beyond the Sea such happenings had led to 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.

Although Po Chū-i's "Song of Enduring Woe" is essentially a piece of sentimental literature in which the words bear hardly any didactic overtone, there are these lines in it that suggest Hsuan Tsung invited rebellion and nearly lost his empire because of his indulgence in Yang Kuei-fei:

*The heights of the Li Palace soar
Amid the azure skies;
And fairy strains, wind-blown on every side
Are heard—soft singing and luxurious dance
Chiming with throb of strings and wood.
And all day long the Emperor
Gazes unweariedly.
—But hark, from Yu Yang thundering
A noise of drums and cavalry
That shakes the earth and jars the melody of 'Rainbow Robes and
Coat of Gossamer'!*



And also these lines:

*Where emerald streamers flashing float,
The Emperor's chariot rolls.
Eleven miles west of the Capital
They halt—the armies will no longer march.
There is no choice: but wistful-eyed,
The dainty-browed beloved one
Before the horsemen dies.*

Thus the writer Chen Hung in his *History of The Song of Enduring Woe*¹ made this comment: "The poem was written not only as a lamentation of the event, but also as a denunciation of *femmes fatales* and treacherous generals, to serve as a lesson for later generations." At the opening of her chapter, the author of *Genji* points out right-away the similarities in position and situation between the Japanese Emperor and Hsuan Tsung, and between the lady of the Wardrobe and Chamber and Yang Kuei-fei. By doing so she prepares the plot of her story for parallelisms with "The Song of Enduring Woe." In fact, the way she puts it, "Barons and courtiers began to look askance" directly echoes Chen Hung's statement "At that, the senior officials of the Capital looked askance" in his account which is the poem's close parallel.

Comparison is then made between the Japanese Emperor's fondness for his lady, the cause of so much gossip and criticism, and the T'ang Emperor's favour for Yang Kuei-fei.

... 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. . . .

... the springtime night went by,
Too sadly swift; and the day mounted high.
Nor from that time was early audience held.

In feasts and merry-making day by day—
In the springtime no springtime holiday
She missed; and in the night the night was hers.
Three thousand loveliest women thronged those halls:
Three thousand loves were spared for her alone.

It is obvious that the former passage in the "Kiritsubo" is based on these lines from Po Chü-i's poem, with some shuffling in the details. Did the three thousand ladies of the T'ang Court display any jealousy towards Yang Kuei-fei who monopolized Hsuan Tsung's affection? Whether intentionally or unintentionally, Po Chü-i left this unsaid, perhaps because of the implicit nature of poetic narrative. Now Murasaki Shikibu, being a woman, is a finer portrayer of female psychology, and will not suffer her Emperor to favour only one. From

¹A prose romance based on the same story as that of the epic, written by the T'ang historian Chen Hung 陳鴻 in the latter years of the same century.

beginning to end his lady was under the jealous oppression of the imperial consort and the other gentlewomen of the Wardrobe and Chamber, a situation that worsened when she bore the Emperor a son. Still, neither the childless Yang Kuei-fei² nor the Japanese lady, who had a prince, could enjoy their Majesties' favour for long. Son of Heaven though he was, T'ang Hsuan Tsung could not protect his beloved one's life when his soldiers threatened to fold their arms and watch An Lu-shan's rebellion spread. Similarly, external pressure and her own frustrations became too much for the sweet-natured, introvert Koi, and she fell ill from suppressed melancholy. The Emperor, seeing her grow each day more thin and wan, could not but let her go away for the sake of her health. Here then, in both works, we find the same heart-rending sorrow of separation, in one case brought about by life's circumstances, in the other by the intervention of death.

At last!
 Though that desired *at last* be come,
 Because I go alone
 How gladly would I live!

The Japanese lady sang this *waka* 和歌 to the Emperor at her moment of departure. Perhaps even then she had sensed that their parting would be final. Fate was indeed unpredictable, nor could the power of oaths and priests redeem her. Having returned to her parents' home, she passed away shortly after midnight. Parted from her forever, the Emperor was plunged into the abyss of bitter memories. His and T'ang Hsuan Tsung's fates were so alike that he began to share the latter's feelings.

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.

Here Murasaki Shikibu openly cites the name of Po Chü-i's poem. The picture of the Everlasting Wrong refers to the contents of the poem pictorialized on scroll or screen. On the painting were *waka* by a poetess of the Heian dynasty, written in her own hand, and Chinese poems in the calligraphy of Tsurayuki, editor of *The Kokin Waka-shu* (Anthology of Ancient and Modern *Waka* 古今和歌書). It was natural that the Emperor should have sad reflections when viewing art and poetry that were about an experience so similar to his own. At this point Murasaki Shikibu successfully brings these two tragic love-stories, the one Japanese and the other Chinese, into parallel perspective, enhancing the depth and complexity of her tale to a highly fascinating degree. Then comes a passage that tells how a messenger, sent to visit the late Koi's home, reported her mission to the Emperor:

²Nowhere in history or fiction is it recorded that Yang Kuei-fei ever had children.

He looked at the present 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 fulfill 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.

This passage contains obvious borrowings from "The Song of Enduring Woe":

*In Linch'ung lived a Taoist,
One of the Hung Tu school,
Who by his special alchemy had power
To summon ghosts to flock to him at will.
This Archimage was warranted,
Through pity of the fretful king,
To make a fearful quest.*

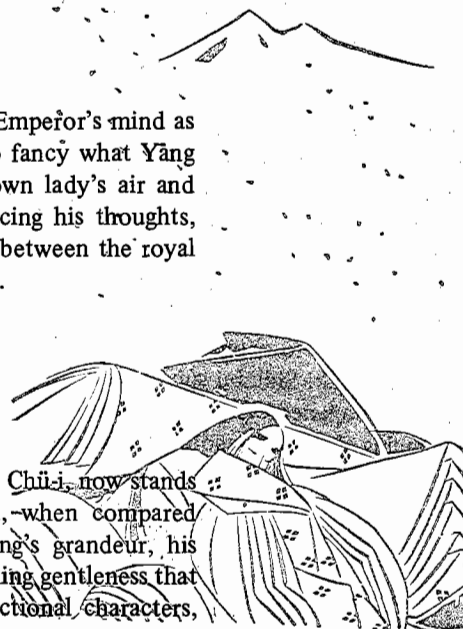
....
*Then sadly gave into his hands, as token
Of truest love, two keepsakes: a small casket,
Gaily enamelled, and a clasp of gold.*

*"One golden prong I keep," she said, "One half
Of the enamelled casket. Look, the pin
Is broken gold, the broken casket bronze...."*

Irrepressible thoughts surged in the Japanese Emperor's mind as he saw his lover's one-time belongings. He began to fancy what Yang Kuei-fei really looked like. Then he recalled his own lady's air and grace, in the days when she was still alive. By tracing his thoughts, Murasaki Shikibu ingeniously invokes a comparison between the royal lady of T'ang and the royal lady of the Heian court.

*The rosy lilies yet in T'ai-yi Pool,
The willows in the gardens of Wei-yang.
Ah, but the water-lilies are her face,
The willow leaves are like her brows—he sees.*

The visage of Yang Kuei-fei, as described by Po Chü-i, now stands out clearly in the Japanese Emperor's mind. Still, when compared with that noble beauty who embodied all of T'ang's grandeur, his own lady, he felt, had a more endearing, more touching gentleness that had a greater appeal for him. Here, through her fictional characters,



Murasaki Shikibu betrays her own aesthetic standards which most Japanese people, ancient and modern, share with her. Then, the Japanese Emperor's thoughts went from the T'ang lady's image to the pledge of love between her and Hsuan Tsung:

*When none was near, in private talk they swore
In heaven as birds that yoked together fly
To fly, or else on earth to grow as trees
That twine their branches from a single stem.*

And so the oath about the Festival of the Seventh Day of the Seventh Month and the Immortal Hall, which Po Chü-i had put into Hsuan Tsung and his lady's mouths, is transplanted into Murasaki Shikibu's chapter and becomes the love-vow between the Japanese royal couple mornings and nights when they were together. But while the words of the oath still lingered in his ears, death had intervened and divided them forever. As both sovereigns realized the unpredictability of life and the uncertainty of fate, their hearts were weighed down by the same sadness. And, just as the title theme of "The Song of Enduring Woe" is concluded in the last lines of the poem—

*"The heavens abide and earth endures," she said,
"Yet heaven and earth some time shall have an end.
But this our woe shall evermore endure."*

its essence also penetrates this chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. Thoughts arising from what he saw in the picture of the Everlasting Wrong continued to bring sad memories to the Japanese Emperor:

*But when he thought of his lost lady's voice and form . . . the
rustling of the wind, the chirping of an insect would cast him into
the deepest melancholy. . . .*

Although not entirely identical with the poem, these words depict the same state of mind, with the same dejection and dread for wind and birdsong, so vividly described in these lines about Hsuan Tsung:

*In exiled palace sojourning he views
The mournful colours of the moon,
And in the night rain hearkens to
The agonizing sound of tinkling bells.*

Again, Murasaki Shikibu's passage—

*The Emperor thought of the girl's mother in the house amid the
thickets. . . . 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. . . .*

is an ingenious adaptation of these lines by Po Chü-i describing Hsuan Tsung's melancholy when, returning to the Capital from Szechuan after

the rebellion was crushed, he found that everything in the palace was the same, except that the woman whom he loved was no more—

*Nightly the fire-flies brought sad memories,
His lonely lamp he trimmed and trimmed again,
Sleepless; and slowly, slowly heard the drums
Of each long watch, until the Galaxy
With glittering lights should usher in the dawn.*

Then in Murasaki Shikibu's story comes a passage which tells how a poem by Ise stirred up the Japanese Emperor's memories of the happy past:

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. . . .

This passage appears *after* the death of the lady in Murasaki Shikibu's story, while in "The Song of Enduring Woe" the lines

*. . . . the springtime night went by,
Too sadly swift; and the day mounted high.
Nor from that time was early audience held.*

depict the royal couple at the height of their happiness. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Murasaki Shikibu's description of the Emperor indulging himself in past memories are in fact a fine modulation of Po Chü-i's lines. As their Emperor mourned for his dead Koi day and night, losing all heart in sleep and food, servants-in-waiting could not help feeling alarmed, and they very sensitively connected the situation with the tragic event that had occurred in the court of T'ang over the sea:

*. . . . 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.*

Of course, "references to a certain Emperor of another land" echoes the earlier passage "They whispered among themselves that in the Land Beyond the Sea such happenings had led to riot and disaster. The people of the country did indeed soon have much grievances to show: and some likened her to Yang Kuei-fei, the mistress of Ming Huang." As said before, although "The Song of Enduring Woe" contains little that can be called preachment, it is nevertheless possible for pre-conditioned readers to derive a lesson about "denunciation of *femmes fatales* and treacherous generals" from it, if they want to. Here, Murasaki Shikibu not only draws parallels between the happenings in the fictitious Heian court and the real T'ang court, but, what is more, openly quotes the story of "The Song of Enduring Woe" as a dire example to be avoided.

III

WHAT IS QUOTED above are examples of straight adaptations from "The Song of Enduring Woe" into the "Kiritsubo". Apart from these, there are passages in the "Kiritsubo" which indirectly reflect the colour and atmosphere of the former work. These contain traces of Po Chū-i's imagination, though not necessarily in wording similar to the poem. Take the opening of the chapter for example:

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.

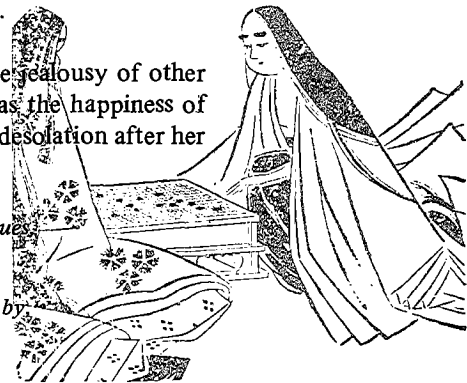
The way Murasaki Shikibu has sculpted her, this lady of the Wardrobe and Chamber neither came from a renowned family nor had any special background, yet among so many ladies of the court she solely won the Emperor's favour and became everyone's enemy. To be so successful, she must be endowed with exceptional talent and beauty. Murasaki Shikibu did not mention this straight-forwardly, but made oblique references at two places: (1) After her death, the Emperor kept thinking about her in comparison with Yang Kuei-fei, and (2) A certain Dame of the Household also mentioned her in comparison, when recommending Fujitsubo to the Emperor as someone who could replace her. Now Po Chū-i's description of Yang Kuei-fei is as follows:

*Too fairly formed for loneliness, one day
She stood selected for the monarch's side.
Glancing, one single smile she gave, which shed
Such radiance that through the palace halls
Each painted, pencill'd dame seemed pale and wan.*

Of course, the poem never delved into the possible jealousy of other royal ladies to Yang Kuei-fei, for its main theme was the happiness of the couple while she was alive, contrasted with his desolation after her death. However, readers who read the lines—

*With hair like clouds she moved, and flower-like hue
And golden plumes that nodded as she went.
Amid her curtains' roseate warmth was spent
That springtime night—the springtime night went by
Too sadly swift; and the day mounted high.
Nor from that time was early audience held.*

*In feasts and merry-making day by day—
In the springtime no springtime holiday
She missed; and in the night the night was hers.
Three thousand loveliest women thronged those halls:
Three thousand loves were spared for her alone.*



can be easily prompted to imagine the envy, hatred and jealousy which the "painted, pencill'd" dames of the palace halls and the other lovely women in the court must have nursed against Yang Kuei-fei. And the rumours connected with Mei-fei must have sprung from such readers' imaginings.³ In comparison, Murasaki Shikibu's story devotes more description to the hostilities of the heroine's jealous rivals:

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 someone locked the door of a portico, so that the poor thing wandered this way and that for a great while in sore distress.

Such tricks and insults, launched against her openly or secretly, were the doings of other women who, seeing that now the Emperor loved her alone, could only resort to such pranks for revenge. What is just implied in "The Song of Enduring Woe" comes up in the "Kiritsubo" as a piece of explicit, elaborate description.

More than anything else, Po Chü-i wanted to reach an overall beautified lyrical effect in his poem, and at places this was achieved at the expense of historical accuracy. For instance, the lines

*A maiden of the house of Yang there was,
Fresh come to womanhood, and in the shade
Of virgin cloisters reared, unknown to men.
Too fairly formed for loneliness, one day
She stood selected for the monarch's side.*

simply contradict the real event of how Hsuan Tsung had abducted Prince Shou's Concubine.⁴ The later episode about the Taoist priest meeting T'ai-chen on the enchanted isle is another purely imaginary passage which, nevertheless, adds considerable mysticism and romantic atmosphere to the poem. In the "Kiritsubo", after the death of the lady of the Wardrobe and Chamber, Murasaki Shikibu inserts a passage in which a royal messenger, dispatched by the grief-stricken Emperor, visited the lady's old home where her mother and the young Prince were staying:

³ Popular history had it that it was the jealous schemes of Yang Kuei-fei that brought about the banishment of her formidable rival Mei-fei 梅妃 to Shang-yang Palace.

⁴ Yang Kuei-fei's beauty so captivated the Emperor that he removed her from Prince Shou 壽王's harem and placed her in a Taoist convent where she adopted the religious name T'ai-chen 太真 (All-true), shortly after which she was taken into the imperial household.



... 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. . . . Then she (the lady's mother) 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. . . .

This messenger was no more than a minor lady-in-waiting of the fourth of fifth rank, very much different from the Linch'iung Taoist priest of the Hung Tu school, who could make arrangements between the quick and the dead; and the old home of the late Koi, situated in a wild spot overgrown with weeds, was very different from the enchanted isle "where glimmering towers in iridescent mist rose". Nevertheless, the messenger hurriedly riding along on an autumn evening and the priest who, "sky-scaling and earth-probing", "searched the bright empyrean and the Yellow Springs that flow beneath the world" were entrusted with similar missions. After seeking out T'ai-chen, who by then had become a fairy in the intangible, incorporeal world, the priest brought back the small casket and the clasp of gold, tokens by which Hsuan Tsung and Yang Kuei-fei had pledged their love in the old days,⁵ plus a gentle reminder from T'ai-chen about their secret vow. Likewise, the mother of the late Koi entrusted the royal messenger with a sash and a comb, old gifts from the Emperor, and a letter. Obviously, these similarities are not accidental, and the source of Murasaki Shikibu's inspiration is easily identified. This is confirmed later when we read of the Emperor associating the image of his dead lady with the words in "The Song of Enduring Woe".

Even in more fragmentary descriptions of scenery in the "Kiritsu-bo" there are places where the story subtly imitates the poem. For example, the scene which the messenger saw, on arriving at the lady's home—

... a strange sight met her eyes . . . since her (the daughter's) 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. . . .

is the same picture Hsuan Tsung saw when he returned home after countless trials and tribulations:

*At home the lawns and lakes are as of old:
The rosy lilies yet in T'ai-yi Pool,
The willows in the gardens of Wei-yang.
....*

*While far and wide autumnal weeds grew rank,
And fallen leaves rudied the palace steps
Unswep.*

⁵See Chen Hung's account of the story.

In the "Kiritsubo", the story about the Emperor and his lady concludes with the royal messenger's report to the Emperor and the latter's lamentation. After that, the plot finds new pivots in relating how he regained contentment in his union with Fujitsubo, who bore a marked resemblance to the late lady, and how the real protagonist of the book, Prince Hikaru Genji, grew up. In the latter part of the "Kiritsubo", the shadow of "The Song of Enduring Woe" gradually fades out, but, at odd moments, it seems that the plot is still not entirely free from the influence of that story from T'ang China. For instance, in moulding the character of Prince Genji, Murasaki Shikibu, besides endowing him with uncommonly handsome looks and extraordinary talent, also emphasized that he was exceptionally good at music:

.... As for his serious studies, he soon learnt to send the sounds of zither 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.

T'ang Hsuan Tsung himself was steeped in music, an ardent lover of *fa-ch'ü*, and stories of his "Imperial Pear Garden Players" were a matter of common knowledge.⁶ Though there is no straight reference to this in "The Song of Enduring Woe", his refined personality is quite imaginable from the lines:

*The heights of the Li Palace soar
Amid the azure skies;
And fairy strains, wind-blown, on every side
Are heard—soft singing and luxurious dance
Chiming with throb of strings and wood.
And all day long the Emperor
Gazes unweariedly.
—But hark, from Yu Yang thundering
A noise of drums and cavalry
That shakes the earth and jars the melody
of "Rainbow Robes and Coat of Gossamer"!*

If the Japanese Emperor resembled Hsuan Tsung in being equally sentimental, it follows naturally that his son, Prince Genji, should incline towards Hsuan Tsung too in talent and sentiments. It would not be a wild guess to say that perhaps the image of the T'ang Emperor, which had become so familiar to Murasaki Shikibu through "The Song of Enduring Woe", had flitted across the writer's mind when she was putting down on paper the character of Prince Genji.

⁶*Fa-ch'ü* 法曲, in which category are included pieces such as "Rainbow Robes and Coat of Gossamer", is the collective name given to music performed in Taoist temples. Description of the orchestra of the three hundred connoisseurs who practised the art in the Imperial Pear Garden are found in Essays on Music in *The Old T'ang History* and Essays on Ritual and Music in *The New T'ang History*.

IV

THE ABOVE is a comparison between parts of the "Kiritsubo" and "The Song of Enduring Woe" which have bearings on one another. Unlike other chapters in *The Tale of Genji*, which often quote from other poems and essays of Po Chü-i,⁷ the "Kiritsubo" confines its references to "The Song of Enduring Woe". To put the case in strongest terms, it can be said that the chapter will hardly stand if not for the support of the poem. Of course, it is Murasaki Shikibu's literary genius that has made *The Tale of Genji* an unsurpassed work in Japan in the past thousand years, and the novel's thematic adaptation from Po Chü-i's poem can only partly account for its value and significance. Still, where the single chapter "Kiritsubo" is concerned, Murasaki Shikibu's deep admiration for the poem can hardly be denied. Ingeniously she has taken T'ang Hsuan Tsung and Yang Kuei-fei's sentimental love-story and replanted it onto the persons of the Japanese Emperor and his lady of the Wardrobe and Chamber, and by so doing she has made the Heian couple relive the tragedy of the T'ang court.

In a letter to his friend Yuan Chen 元稹, Po Chü-i wrote:

But when I came back to Ch'ang-an, I heard about the story of an army officer who wanted to find himself a courtesan. The girl boasted of her achievements, saying, "How can you liken me to the other girls? I can sing Po Chü-i's 'Song of Enduring Woe!'" and thus she raised her price. . . . Recently, again, when I was passing through Han-nan, it happened that my host there was giving an entertainment and had got together a number of musicians to entertain his guests. All the courtesans who saw me coming pointed at me and said to one another, "That's the one who wrote the Songs of Ch'in and 'The Song of Enduring Woe!'" . . . Indeed, what people love of my poetry today is nothing more than some divers rhymes and 'The Song of Enduring Woe'.

The poet himself admitted that "The Song of Enduring Woe" enjoyed wide popularity, and even while he was alive his verse and prose works were already known in Korea, Japan and other places.⁸ The fact that, among numerous Chinese works that had found their way into Japan, Murasaki Shikibu was most fond of "The Song of Enduring Woe" and had felt so deeply moved by its tragic quality as to have taken pains to weave its essence into *The Tale of Genji*, only proves the existence of universal elements in literature and art, the appreciation of which can very well be based on reasons of the heart that transcend nationality and are common to all mankind.

⁷See "The Tale of Genji and the Collected Works of Po Chü-i", by 丸山 洋子, Tokyo Women's University.

⁸See p.169-174 of the author's article "The Influence of the T'ang Period Culture on the Japanese Heian Literary Circle" in No. 21 of the *Bulletin of the College of Arts* 文史哲學報, National Taiwan University, 1972.

