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Christina Laffin

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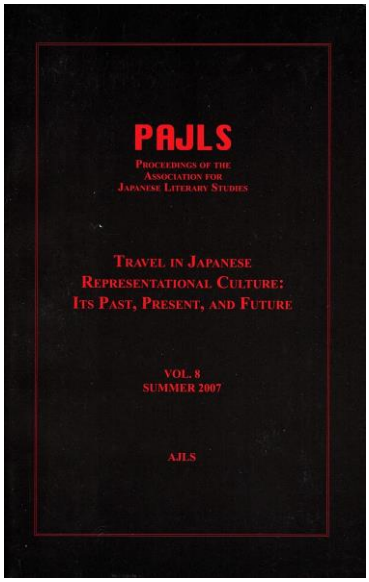

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THE ROAD WELL TRAVELED: POETRY AND POLITICS IN *DIARY OF THE SIXTEENTH NIGHT MOON*

Christina Laffin
University of British Columbia

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF TRAVEL

At the opening of her travel diary *Izayoi nikki* 十六夜日記 (Diary of the Sixteenth Night Moon, ca. 1283), Nun Abutsu 阿仏尼 (1222–1283) writes,

> There may be people who believe the Way of Poetry[1] to be without sincerity and to be nothing more than an empty diversion, but the Sages of the Way have noted that ever since the Heavenly Rock Door was opened, beginning with the sacred songs of the gods of the four directions,[2] poetry has served to calm the world and act as a medium in bringing peace among people.[3]

Drawing from Ki no Tsurayuki's Kana Preface to the *Kokinshū* 古今集 (905–920), Abutsu links her legal quest for a land inheritance and recognition within her husband's hereditary line to the political efficacy of poetry. When Abutsu wrote this, she was embroiled in a political and legal battle over the literary and land holdings of her late husband Fujiwara Tameie 藤原為家 (1198–1275), heir to the Mikohidari lineage, the preeminent literary line of the late thirteenth century. During her marriage to Tameie, she managed to secure valuable literary manuscripts and a lucrative landed estate called the Hosokawa-shō 細河庄. Though she was still in possession of various literary manuscripts, works she dismissingly refers to in her diary as "innumerable old scraps of poetry,"[4]

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[1] The way of Japanese poetry (*Yamato uta no michi*).

[2] According to the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Records of Ancient Matters, ca. 712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan, ca. 720), the sun goddess Amaterasu was lured from the cave where she had taken refuge through the celebratory songs and dances of the gods, which marked the beginning of Japanese poetry. The "gods of the four directions" represent all of the myriad gods.

[3] All translations of *Izayoi nikki* are my own, based on the following Kujō-ke-bon text annotated by Iwasa Miyoko: "Izayoi nikki," in *Chūsei nikki kikō shū*, ed. Nagasaki Ken et al., Shinpen nihon koten bungaku zenshū 48 (Shōgakukan, 1994), 268. Hereafter, the Iwasa annotated text will be cited as SNKBZ.

[4] These "old scraps" likely included drafts of poems left by Teika and Tameie, as

the court-based tribunal of Rokuhara had recently awarded the Hosokawa Estate to Abutsu's rival Tameuji 為氏 (1222–1286), a son born of Tameie's primary wife.[5]

Four years after the death of Tameie, Abutsu's first son by him was tonsured, and the others were now sixteen (Tamesuke 為相) and fourteen (Tamemori 為守) years old. Their political future, and Abutsu's own, depended upon their status within the Mikohidari lineage, access to their father's literary holdings, and economic support from his land holdings. These were some of the considerations that led Abutsu to, "set off, without foresight, led by the moon of the sixteenth night," to Kamakura, where she would defend her case and produce a diary echoing her legal appeal in poetic form.

By recording her journey to Kamakura as a travel diary that was sent to her sons and circulated among her relatives and allies, Abutsu was able to assert what she claimed was her rightful place within the Mikohidari lineage. In *Izayoi nikki*, Abutsu builds a case for herself by composing poems that dwell on sadness, loneliness, and deprivation and by reproducing a discourse of sacrifice and motherly love, two themes that have dominated Abutsu's reception through history.[6] This paper will focus on Abutsu's use of travel poems that reinforce the image of a sacrificing mother and bind her poetically, politically, and morally to other members of the Mikohidari line.

THE LIFE AND TRAVELS OF NUN ABUTSU

Abutsu was born in 1222. Her parentage is unknown, but her mother remarried Taira no Norishige 平度繁, a lower-ranking military officer who eventually held the post of Governor of Sado (*Sado no kami* 佐渡守). Norishige adopted Abutsu and arranged for her to enter the service of Princess Ankamon'in 安嘉門院 (1209–1283) from the age of fifteen. The salon of Ankamon'in was known for fostering various other poets of the time[7] and Abutsu appears to have flourished, developing her talents as a

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well as treatises on poetry and private poetry collections of Tameie's line, the Mikohidari. Before departing for Kamakura, Abutsu writes, "I recorded postscripts (*okugaki*) in various poetry books that had been kept from one generation to another and selecting the important, sent them to Tamesuke."

[5] For more on the transfer of land and documents from Tameie to his sons and the court case that ensued, see Paul S. Atkins, "Nijō v. Reizei: Land Rights, Litigation, and Literary Authority in Medieval Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66:2 (December 2006): 495–529.

[6] In scholarship and popular reception Abutsu has traditionally been associated with the notion of "motherly love" (*boseiai*).

[7] The salon of Ankamon'in included the Daughter of Teika 定家女 (b. 1164),

poet, critic, and *Genji* expert. *Utatane*, translated as "Fitful Slumbers" by John Wallace, is thought to depict Abutsu during this period, though it may have been written later in life as a memoir.[8]

Sometime after the failed love affair depicted in *Utatane*, Abutsu left secular life and practiced as a lay nun at Hokkeji 法華寺, before returning to life in the capital. The identity of her first husband is unknown, but Abutsu moved with him to Matsuo 松尾, in northern Kyōto, where she gave birth to a daughter and son.[9] Within a few years, at the age of thirty-one, she was commissioned to create a copy of *The Tale of Genji* for the daughter[10] of Fujiwara Tameie 藤原為家 (1198–1275). Tameie was heir to the Mikohidari lineage of his grandfather Shunzei 俊成 (1114–1204) and his father Teika 定家 (1162–1241). Despite a twenty-four year age difference, Abutsu's work as a copyist and assistant to Tameie soon led to a romantic relationship, one which is documented in the love poems of the *Gyokuyōshū* 玉葉集 (Collection of Jeweled Leaves, 1213). Abutsu bore Tameie three sons and secured for herself not only his affection and literary tutelage, but also the documents and land holding previously mentioned. His death led her to take the tonsure and to dedicate the remainder of her life to protecting the interests of her children, which were closely bound to her own.

Traditionally Abutsu has been hailed as the ideal mother and wife, appearing in textbooks designed for women as late as the 1930s. While this image of the loving mother has dominated reception of Abutsu and her work, in her own time she appears to have invited criticism. Tameuji's brother Genshō 源承 (ca. 1224–?), for example, expressed doubt about her true motivations for undertaking the court case, claiming she had duped Tameie into giving up his possessions in order to use them for her own profit. More recent scholars have occasionally followed Genshō's lead, prompting articles such as one pointedly entitled "The

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Fujiwara Inshi or Yoruko 因子 (also known as Minbukyō no Naishi); Ankamon'in no Takakura 安嘉門院高倉 (dates unknown), daughter of Koga Chikayori 久我親縁 (1184–1256) and granddaughter of Michichika 通親 (1149–1202); and Shikishimon'in no Mikushige 式乾門院御匣 (dates unknown, also known as Ankamon'in Sanjō 安嘉門院三条), daughter of Koga Michimitsu 久我通光 (1187–1248).

[8] John R. Wallace, "Fitful Slumbers: Nun Abutsu's *Utatane*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 43:4 (Winter 1988).

[9] Abutsu's son of this marriage is referred to in *Izayoi nikki* as Ajari, his title as a Buddhist monk. Her daughter, Ki no Naishi, served at the court of GoFukakusa, and is cited in the diary as being Abutsu's only daughter.

[10] Tameie's daughter was known as GoSaga-in no Dainagon no Suke 後嵯峨院大納言典侍.

Evil-Woman Abutsu."[11] At the heart of this debate is what constitutes wifely loyalty and motherly duty, two notions that Abutsu clearly uses to her advantage in her travel diary.

MEISHO AS MARKERS OF LINEAGE AND SELF-SACRIFICE

Diary of the Sixteenth Night Moon, or *Izayoi nikki,* depicts Abutsu's journey to Kamakura to defend her court case and records poems she exchanged with friends and relatives, including important allies within her husband's family, such as Kyōgoku Tamekane 京極為兼 (1254–1332) and his sister Tameko 為子 (d. 1316). Abutsu's travel poetry has often been criticized by modern scholars as being unoriginal and reading like a textbook on poetry composition.[12] The poems in the travel section are indeed conventional in drawing from set precedents and common *topoi* associated with the sites she visits, but to see them primarily as succeeding or failing on these grounds is to miss the point: Abutsu uses these poems to reiterate why she is deserving of the Hosokawa Estate. By asserting her position as a wife and mother, linking herself to members of the Mikohidari line, and dwelling upon hardship and sacrifice, Abutsu weaves these poems into a larger moral claim that in turn buttresses her legal case.

One of the most basic elements of Japanese premodern travel writing is the literary relationship to the topography over which the poet journeys. The ground over which one traveled was always already inscribed by an accretion of poetry from the past, linked to new poetic production through references to famous sites and allusions to their multiple layers of associations.

Like other travel poets, Abutsu creates poems at each of the famous sites (*meisho* 名所) along her journey. But she crafts her supposedly textbook-perfect poems so that they address her immediate concerns regarding the court case and the literary legacy of her husband. Through these poems, Abutsu builds a case for herself and lays claim to the economic and literary spoils of her late husband.

The first *meisho* where Abutsu composes a poem is Ōsaka no Seki, or Ōsaka Barrier. She writes,

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[11] Seno Seiichirō, "Akujo Abutsu-ni," *Rekishi hansō* (Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1987).
[12] Ishida Yoshisada can be seen as representing a widely-held view of *Izayoi nikki* when he writes that the work is "lukewarm and unfulfilling (*chiguhagu na kuitarinasa*)." Ishida Yoshisada, *Kaidōki, Izayoi nikki*, Asahi koten zensho (Asahi shuppan, 1951). The notion of *Izayoi nikki* as poetry manual was first proposed by Kazamaki Keijirō. Kazamaki Keijirō, "Abutsu-ni no bungaku (toku ni Izayoi nikki ni tsuite)," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 6:10 (October 1929).

As life itself	*Sadamenaki*
is uncertain,	*inochi wa shiranu*
what lies ahead on this journey is unknown;	*tabi naredo*
I depart,	*mata Ōsaka to*
trusting that I will return to Meeting Hill (Ōsaka).[13]	*tanomete zo yuku*

Abutsu borrows the notion of placing one's trust in Ōsaka, the place of reunion, directly from a poem by Tameie:

Meeting Hill,	*Ōsaka wa*
the path of parting	*yuku mo kaeru mo*
for those who leave and those who return—	*wakareji no*
only its name,	*hito danome naru*
in which people trust, ages.	*na nomi furitsutsu*

Tameie's poem in turn follows the lead of another Mikohidari poet, the Daughter of Shunzei (ca. 1171–1254):

If it is the Barrier	*Koete mata*
at Meeting Hill	*koishiki hito ni*
that the one for whom I long	*Ōsaka no*
is crossing,	*seki naraba koso*
then let me trust in its name.	*na o mo tanomame*

While the ideas of parting and reunion go hand in hand with the place name of Ōsaka, the notion of placing one's trust in Ōsaka no Seki is not a common trope within Kamakura-era poetry. One of the few examples is by Asukai Masaari 飛鳥井雅有 (1241–1301), who studied with Tameie and Abutsu at their residence in Saga. Abutsu's poem carefully follows the lead of her husband, demonstrating her knowledge of Mikohidari poetry and Tameie's teachings, a technique Abutsu frequently repeats in her diary.

Although scholars have proposed that the travel poems may have functioned as an educational manual on poetic composition for Abutsu's sons, compared with other travel diaries and poetry collections, *meisho* appear to be represented relatively selectively. Abutsu focuses

[13] SNKBZ, 293.

particularly on sites where Tameie composed poems, many of which can be found in his private collections, such as *Chūin eisō* 中院詠草 (Chūin Poetry Compositions, ca. 1235) and the *Tameie shū* 為家集 (The Tameie Collection, completed ca. 1265–1275). By layering her poems over those of Tameie's, Abutsu demonstrates her knowledge of his poetry and allegiance to his teachings, thus proving herself to be true heir to her husband's poetic legacy, the sole bearer through which his teachings will be transmitted to future generations.

This doubling of her poetry with that of Tameie's that we see in the Ōsaka no Seki example is perhaps the most subtle way in which Abutsu argues for her right to Tameie's property. Her travel poems also contain more direct appeals to the reader, asserting Abutsu's loyalty to Tameie and the sacrifice she is making on his behalf. For example,

> On the eighteenth, as we crossed the Fuji River[14] at the barrier to Mino Province,[15] the following poem came to mind:
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> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Were it not | *Waga kodomo* |
> | for the sake of | *kimi ni tsukaen* |
> | my children and my lord, | *tame naraba* |
> | would I be crossing you, | *wataramashi ya wa* |
> | Fuji River by the Barrier?[16] | *Seki no Fujikawa* |

The answer to this rhetorical question is, of course, "no." Abutsu claims to be undertaking the fourteen day, five hundred kilometer journey to Kamakura only to protect her children and to uphold the wishes of her husband. Yet this poem again draws upon the illustrious history of the Mikohidari line. Abutsu's poem alludes to Teika's *Fujikawa hyakushu* 藤川百首 (1224), a series of one hundred poems which were written to lament the fact that he did not receive a court promotion. Abutsu thus parallels her own miserable state of failing to receive the Hosokawa Estate with the position of Teika when he wrote the *Fujikawa hyakushu*. The *Fujikawa hyakushu* and the poems it contained came to be regarded by the Mikohidari as an important text in the transmission of poetic teachings. Abutsu's knowledge of it is used to demonstrate her grasp of the family's history and her dedication to passing on its practices.

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[14] Present Fujiko River, a site of poetic composition for both Tameie and his father Teika.
[15] Present southern Gifu Province.
[16] SNKBZ, 275.

Abutsu's travel poems thus reinforce her position through both their content, which focuses on the difficulty of her journey and her motivation to undertake it, and their style, which draws from Mikohidari poets and echoes poems by Tameie. The journey becomes both a symbol of sacrifice and a stimulus for poetic composition, allowing her to travel through Tameie's literary heritage and to cement her role as heir and transmitter.

Throughout the travel section, the reader is constantly reminded of the court case in Kamakura and the importance of a successful outcome. At Atsuta Shrine, Abutsu makes an offering of five poems, all of which integrate images associated with poetry composition, (such as the Bay of Poetry, or *waka no ura*) in an appeal to the gods for their help in winning back the disputed estate. Partway through her journey, Abutsu arrives at a shrine dedicated to a "matchmaking god" (*musubu no kami*), which, taken literally, "binds" one to a conjugal partner. With her husband no longer alive, Abutsu wishes for resolution in her court case and the composure to quell her bitter feelings towards Tameuji:

If you are the god	*Mamore tada*
of binding promises	*chigiri musubu no*
then protect me from	*kami naraba*
this unreleased enmity,	*tokenu urami ni*
and lead me not astray.[17]	*waga mayowasade*

Like many of the travel poems that Abutsu offers to the gods, the content emphasizes her loyalty as a wife to Tameie while reinforcing her moral superiority over her rival Tameuji. This claim is seen at the opening of the diary, in which Abutsu writes of Tameuji's lack of filial piety and his failure to honor his father's dying wish by taking ownership of the Hosokawa Estate:

> Despite my husband's advice of "support the Way of Poetry," "educate the children," "pay tribute to ensure the repose of my soul in the next world," and his certain promise of the Hosokawa Estate, the flow of the "Narrow River"[18] has been senselessly dammed.[19]

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[17] SNKBZ, 276.
[18] The Hosokawa or "Narrow River" Estate was the object of the land dispute between Tameuji and Abutsu's son Tamesuke, thus Abutsu implies that Tameuji has failed to recognize her son's right to the land.
[19] SNKBZ, 269.

Since the ideal of filial piety formed part of the legal basis for land rights within warrior law, a focus on morality and proof of Tameuji's shortcomings could bolster Abutsu's legal claim to the Hosokawa Estate.[20] By composing poetry at various famous shrines along her route, Abutsu transforms her legal case into a religious appeal that rests on her loyalty as a wife and her moral superiority over Tameuji. It is fitting that Abutsu completes her journey with a poem lamenting the death of her husband and complaining of her present state.

I would not be drenched	*Tachi wakare*
in the waves of tears	*yomo uki nami wa*
of departure,	*kake mo seji*
if I were still living in the same world	*mukashi no hito no*
as he of the past.[21]	*onaji yo naraba*

The traditional approach to Abutsu's travel poems, based on the work of Kazamaki Keijirō,[22] has been to take them as a series of compositions on famous sites written for the edification of her sons. More recently, the scholar and Abutsu biographer Nagasaki Ken has argued that the poems on famous sites represent a random selection that Abutsu composed hastily as she hurried towards Kamakura.[23] Both views are problematic in that Abutsu's interactions with members of the Mikohidari line show she was likely sending poetic exchanges and portions of her diary to the capital while in Kamakura. Like other diarists, she had the opportunity to revise drafts and compose new poetry based on actual or invented memories of her journey.[24]

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[20] According to Ōtake Hideo, children could lose the right of inheritance if they were proven unfilial. Ōtake Hideo, *"Ie" to josei no rekishi*, Kōbundō hōgaku sensho 4 (Kōbundō, 1977; reprint, 1985). While some scholars have proposed that unfilial behavior was merely a pretense for property transfer, Paul Atkins suggests that real tensions existed between Tameuji and Tameie that led to the reallocation of inheritance properties. See Atkins, "Nijō v. Reizei," 517, 525.

[21] SNKBZ, 269.

[22] Kazamaki Keijirō, "Abutsu-ni no bungaku."

[23] See "*Izayoi nikki* no tabi" in Nagasaki Ken and Hamanaka Osamu, *Kōdō suru josei Abutsu-ni*, Nihon no sakka 22 (Shintensha, 1996).

[24] Nagasaki notes how headnotes to Tameie's poems in the *Tameie shū* (Tameie Collection) suggest that some have been composed based on fan paintings (*byōbu uta*). Scholars have shown how other travelers, such as GoFukakusa Nijō (b. 1258), frequently fictionalized their journeys. See, for example, Mizuhara Hajime, "*Towazugatari* no kyokōsei o megutte," in *Towazugatari: chūsei joryū nikki bungaku no sekai*, ed. Ishihara Shōhei, Joryū nikki bungaku kōza 5 (Benseisha, 1990).

While we will never know to what extent *Izayoi nikki* in its present form may differ from what Abutsu originally wrote, the content suggests that it was written as a deliberate attempt to assert her views regarding the Kamakura court case, rather than simply functioning as a poetry textbook. The travel section reflects this with poems modeled on those of Tameie and his relatives, and a focus on sites associated with loneliness and sacrifice. In addition to dwelling on the difficulties of her journey, Abutsu offers poems at shrines that represent her case as an appeal to the gods. By drawing from poetic and moral discourses that bind Abutsu to her husband and vilify her rival Tameuji, *Izayoi nikki* functions as a literary and moral testament that supports Abutsu's legal case, while laying claim to the past memories and future aspirations of a lineage.

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