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Female Anger in the literature of Heian period

(平安文学における女性の怒り)

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1. Abstract

In this paper I will focus on the issue of female anger as it was expressed in the culture of Heian period, and will try to provide an explanation for the reason, why the subject of anger and emotions that were related to it, occupied such a large place in the gender discourse of that period. I will attempt to prove, that anger was initially an emotion that belonged to men, and any expression of it by a woman was condemned as unfeminine and out of the social norm frames. Moreover, I will demonstrate how the notion of female anger was preserved as a threat for men and/or family welfare.

2. The Discourse of Anger in Freudian and Feminist studies

Oxford English Dictionary gives the following definition of anger: “Anger, *n.* 1. That which pains or afflicts, or the passive feeling which it produces; trouble, affliction, vexation, sorrow. *Obs.* 2. a. The active feeling provoked against the agent; passion, rage; wrath, ire, hot displeasure; *c. spec.* Dissatisfied with and outspoken against the prevailing state of affairs, current beliefs, etc”

In its most basic form, anger is a survival emotion common to all animals. Darwin referred to this as the rage reflex (Seaward, p. 111). Freud referred to the rage reflex as well; due to his studies, he sees anger as an emotion, uncontrollable by conscious thought. Freud did not focus his attention on anger; however, he dedicated his studies to emotions, as well as the ways one is dealing with one's emotions. He introduced such terms as “repression”, “denial” and “sublimation” in order to describe the way people deal with their anger and unwanted emotions. Rather than dealing with anger in its pure terms, Freud often referred to aggression, anxiety and the like. Although these notions are not identical to the notion of anger, Freud touched upon the issue of anger numerous times. He was ambivalent in his treatment of strong emotions,

such as hatred or rage, rather preferring to deal with the inhibition of those by means of repression, suppression and self-control. In this paper, I will refer quite often to the concept of repression, that is, the involuntary psychological act of expelling one's desires and impulses from one's consciousness. Or, in other words, not allowing the feeling of anger to reach one's consciousness, but rather locking it in the spectrum of the unconscious. Sublimation can be considered as another form / way of managing one's feelings of anger, that is, transformation of emotions into some other sphere of expression, such as art or writing. For this reason, feminist discourse often argues that women's writing tends to emerge as an act of insubordination and sublimation of one's suppressed feelings. The subject of anger is prominent in modern feminist theory, that borrows its concepts heavily from Freudian theory.

In their discussion of anger, modern feminists agree that, unlike men, women were mostly denied the possibility of experiencing or expressing anger (Lerner (1985), Showalter (1977, 1987), Kennedy (2000), Spellman (1989), Bell (2000), Cox, Stabb and Buckner (1999)). Society allowed men to express their anger more freely. Women, however, were discouraged from expressing their angry emotions for many centuries in order to match and maintain social conventions, that is, to always remain gentle and pleasant. This concept was common to many cultures, and the society of Heian period is not an exception.

3. Anger in the Literature of the Heian period

The Heian period of Japan is characterized, among its many cultural features, by transition from one social pattern to another. It is the period, when the Buddhist and the Confucian doctrines, already accepted and internalized by the Japanese culture, become a part of the cultural heritage and of the social order. The hierarchy, the moral norms and the universal beliefs of the Buddhist and the Confucian traditions find their niches inside Japan. One of the changes, which occurred as a result of this process, was in the social status of women. However, women still had many more privileges and freedom, than in the later periods. They could inherit and possess property, and although their mobil-

ity and freedom were very restricted, in many ways women had a lot of influence in the political and cultural life of Heian society. The fashion in clothing, poetry and fine arts was dictated by women; and although hiragana was considered to be a form of female writing, many aristocrats wrote poetry in hiragana. To sum up, although it witnessed the beginning of the process, in which Japanese women lost the social and political status they possessed in the earlier centuries, the Heian period was also a time, when women could indirectly rule the political and cultural spheres of the Heian life. The Kamakura period and later centuries saw the rise of the military class and the establishment of the Japanese society according to the Confucian and Buddhist traditions. Female elegance and refinement of the Heian period stopped being relevant to the state, which by then was torn by endless wars.

4. Female Anger in the *Tale of Genji*

Doris Borgen in her book *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in the Tale of Genji*, states the following:

“The Heian court’s highly stylized way of life demanded a ceremonial approach to the emotions. The court’s sumptuous style required not only the submission, voluntary or coerced, of the lower classes, but also the repression of the courtier’s own impulsive behavior. The men and women of the court were not, however, always successful in the exercise of rigid self-control. Anger was expressed... Aggression, which seems to be an integral part of human nature that can never be entirely eliminated, emerged most dramatically in the private lives of the Heian aristocracy, especially in gender relations. That aggression was an element of Heian courtship is easy to overlook because violent acts took place within an elegantly mannered social context. Aggressive acts were concealed in a courtship ritual so refined as to almost elude us ” (1).

This excerpt refers to two notions: anger and aggression. Those two were either repressed, or, if expressed, then in the manner,

that was appropriate within the social norms and conventions of the Heian culture. However, the latter assumption implies that any expression of anger or aggression, which was considered to be a deviation from the social norm, was discouraged and condemned. Thus, one could express dissatisfaction or anger, as long as it was “proper” within the social convention. Once one’s behavior became inappropriate, it was seen a deviation and criticized. In the following paragraphs, I will present examples from Heian period literature, in which such behavior comes into play.

The notorious chapter “The Broom Tree” from Murasaki Shikibu’s *The Tale of Genji* contains the episode “Judgments of a Rainy Night”, which depicts the conversation between Genji and a few young men; one of the participants, the guardsman, who was slightly older than the rest of the present men, begins to talk about a lover he used to have, a woman with great skills and accomplishments, but “violently jealous” (39) in nature, which ends up being responsible for “interminable quarrelling” between the couple. Describing the relationship, the guardsman mentions that in one of the arguments they used to have, the woman bit his finger (40). Following his angry reaction, the couple has parted for awhile; the husband had no serious intentions of leaving his wife. Keeping distance in order to teach her a lesson, the husband saw with satisfaction, that the woman restrains herself, and is “always careful not to anger or hurt” (40). However, he kept his cold manner, in order to “give her another lesson or two” (41), telling the woman that he had “no intention of reforming, and made a great show of independence” (41). Suddenly, “without warning”, the woman died.

Edith Sarra (1999) states, that for the male narrator of the story, “the point is that a woman’s emotions - particularly hostile ones - must be repressed, and there is something freakish about women who do not repress them” (33). The poem, which the wife sends in response to the angry poem of her husband, inquires: “For one bitten finger must all be bitten away?” (41). Here, the sole expression of anger results in the death of the woman, who expressed it. It is important to

note that in *The Tale of Genji* anger is mostly related to jealousy. Jealousy is discouraged, as a feeling, unsuitable for a woman and not convenient for a man to endure. Anger is discouraged as the result of jealousy, and the expression of it can harm both the man, who is the object of these emotions, and also his relatives.

Anger, when expressed by women, is a result of jealousy, frustration or other causes, is always condemned. Another good example is lady Rokujo, one of Genji's lovers, who, noticing his increasing coldness towards her feels angry and sorrowful, and her anger and sorrow increase. Making a comparison between lady Rokujo and Yugao, Genji reflects upon the emotions of both women: "She (Lady Rokujo) had every right to be resentful, and yet her jealous ways were not pleasant. It was that sad lady (Yugao) to whom his thoughts first turned. Here was the girl beside him, so simple and undemanding; and the other was so impossibly forceful in her demands". The same night, when Genji's reflections take place, Yugao suddenly passes away,

"A hope of relief from this agony of indecision had sent her to the river of lustration, and there she had been subjected to violence". Later in the story, during the time when Genji's wife, Aoi, falls ill, Rokujo described as being distressed, she is looking at herself in horror, and upon hearing rumors that she is the one whose angry spirit caused the illness, thinks that her jealousy and anger released the demons (136). She has a repeating dream, where she sees herself being someone who would "push and shake the lady, and flail at her blindly and savagely"(137), is a clear expression of subconscious anger, which Rokujo herself is only vaguely aware of. Lady Rokujo's spirit becomes a vengeful demon, who kills two of Genji's women and later possesses Murasaki. However, this is not the only case, when the disease is believed to be caused by an angry woman. In the chapter "The Oak tree", Kashiwagi's illness is believed by soothsayers to be caused by "a jealous woman [who] had taken possession of him" (470). Here I equate jealousy with anger, since anger is often being the direct product of jealousy. In Collins English Dictionary, jealousy is defined as "the feeling of anger or bitterness which someone has when they think that another person is trying to take a lover or friend, or a possession, away

from them”.

Even when Genji is urged to admit, that the woman's anger has its reasons, and she has a right to be angry, overly lengthy expression of it becomes irritating for him: “Even when her (Rokujo's) anger seemed justified it lasted too long, and her jealousy was more than a man could be asked to endure (449). The fact that the woman's anger here lasts too long, reveals her inability to control it, which is one of the main reasons, why a woman's anger was seen as more dangerous, than the man's. Lady Rokujo, the most well known for her jealousy and the outcome in which it resulted, is portrayed as being distressed, since she cannot control her anger, and hence believes that the angry demons are released by her emotion without her knowing it, and against her will. In other words, female anger is something produced by a person, who cannot bind and control his emotions. Man, on the other hand, was believed to be a creature, who was better at controlling his own emotions and feelings; thus, his anger would not turn against him or his surroundings, unless it was a controlled damage. In other words, although man had much more power to do something when he was in the state of anger, woman's anger in *The Tale of Genji* seems to be somewhat related to mysterious powers; it is sometimes connected to the supernatural, and thus is much more threatening than any man's rage.

A woman who does not show her anger, and does not allow herself such emotion, as well as jealousy, and who does not evoke such emotions in a man, is presented as virtuous and pleasant. A pleasant woman, according to the guardsman from “The Broom Tree” chapter, is someone who not only is not jealous, but also someone who does not give her husband a reason to be jealous himself. A woman's patience to wait without chagrin and jealousy was a trait, which made a man's, such as the guardian's, affection to grow (42). However, being too calm about the lover's infrequent visits and his neglect was not good either, since “her very lack of jealousy might have brought a suspicion that there was another man in her life” (43). “Where are you to go for the woman who has no defects and who combines the virtues of all three”, asks the guardian, referring to the stories of the three women he had re-

lationship with.

Perhaps the most obvious question one can ask after reading the abovementioned examples, is why anger is considered to be so harmful and dangerous when it is expressed by a woman, and why a woman who had those angry emotions was condemned and advised by the figures of authority in her life to repress them. In this context, beliefs about emotional experience are of particular interest, because emotions both result from and maintain power relations. Power is usually associated with control over other individuals and the influence one has on others.

Consequently, to assume, that a man in the abovementioned episode from *The Tale of Genji*, had power, that is, control and influence over his wife, means to assume, that his wife is found in the position, subordinate to her husband. Such an action, as biting her husband's finger, is considered to stand outside of the behavioral norms, permitted only to low-status people, since it indicates emotions of contempt, anger and the like. A woman was allowed to feel jealousy to some extent, however conditioned by the fact that it must be expressed in such ways, as sadness, melancholy, fear etc. In case of the wife, who bit her husband's finger, one can claim that she snatched, and in this way stole the status which her husband held in their relationship, claiming by her anger the right to be the one in power. Of course, this behavior was unacceptable, and the husband had to go to the extreme, and cut the relationship with the wife, in order to reclaim the power he had over her, which he achieved by taking total control over their relationship.

5. Anger in the *Konjaku Tales*

Women of the Heian period were limited by certain cultural boundaries, which created an image of an ideal woman. In order to be considered a good match, a woman had to fulfill the expectations, which were attributed to an ideal woman. She was required to be elegant, well-educated, proficient in arts, such as music, poetry, making of perfumes,

calligraphy etc. In addition, she was required not to be jealous, to be tolerant of the husband having concubines and to be patient. Jealousy was strictly condemned, along with the unwanted emotions, which accompanied jealousy. A woman could be sad and melancholic, since those emotions were in accord with the fashionable "mono no aware" atmosphere. For example, a woman, left by her husband in the *Konjaku Tales*, was rewarded by his return to her, if she managed to keep elegant appearance, such as the tales 30:10, 30:11, etc illustrate. On the other hand, anger and contempt were considered highly unfeminine. The discourse of female anger in the Heian texts, both in those which were written by the upper class nobility, and in those, which were part of the Japanese folklore, reflects these contemporary beliefs.

One may wonder, why anger was listed, along with jealousy, as one of the unwanted and condemned features for a Heian woman to possess. As it was mentioned previously, although a noble lady of the Heian period was relatively independent, and could even own her own property and be her parents' heir, she, nevertheless, was dependent economically on her husband. The husband took care of such arrangements, as various rites and ceremonies, repairs of the house (Arntzen, *The Kagero Diary*, 118, 132), etc. Dependence always implies subordination. And subordination, as it was stated above, does not allow the low-power individual to express anger, resentment and so on.

In the texts which will be cited below, female anger is shown as either something grotesque, comical, and almost a parody of anger, or, on the other hand, as something frightening and uncanny. In the first case it emphasizes a woman's helplessness, since those emotions have no influence on the situation, except when harmful for the woman herself, such as can be seen in the passage written by Sei-Shonagon, to which I will return later; while in the latter case a woman's anger may lead to terrible consequences, often supernatural, such as releasing angry spirits by lady Rokujo in *The Tale of Genji*. Unlike the image of the angry woman in the tales and novels of Heian period, in reality reflected in the *Pillow Book* and the *Kagero diary*, even if they might be decorated fictitiously, a woman's anger does not awake angry ghosts and does not affect men. *The Tale of Genji* contains two descrip-

tions of female anger: realistic, as in the case of the finger-biting wife, whose anger only shows her helplessness and brings misery upon her, and supernatural, as in the case of lady Rokujo, whose jealous emotions lead to the deaths of Yugao and princess Aoi.

I will illustrate now how both of these versions of female anger come into play in certain texts of the Heian period

Two of the *Konjaku Tales* represent female anger in the characters of angry female demons, waiting for their victims on a bridge. Tale 27:13 tells about a young man, who bragged that he can cross a bridge, which nobody could cross and stay alive. The young man steps on the bridge and meets a woman, looking "as if she had been deserted by someone" (84). An image of an unescorted woman was, probably, a rare one in the Heian Japan. In addition, her "purple silk robe over a dark purple gown and... a long red skirt" indicate her belonging to the upper class; a noble woman could not, by all means, be found outdoors alone. The young man, of course, realizes, that "there is no reason for a woman like her to be standing alone...it must be a demon" (84), and attempts to pass her by. The woman begs him to take her to a village, and, after he ignores her plea, viciously blurts out: "What a merciless man!" (85), to which even the earth resounds. Although the young man manages to escape this time, eventually the demon gets to him and kills him.

Another tale from the same chapter (27:21), describes elaborately the image of a she-demon. The story tells about a warrior, named Ki no Tosuke, who, passing a bridge on his way home, meets a woman standing alone. The woman asks the warrior to pass a package to a certain person; however, Tosuke forgets the request, and arrives home with the package. Tosuke's jealous wife finds the package and opens it, revealing its unpleasant content (99). The warrior wraps the package again and takes it to the appointed place, where another woman is waiting for him. The woman realizes that the package was opened, and becomes furious (気色糸悪気), at which point her appearance turns frightful. Tosuke escapes home, and soon passes away. Although it is not clear whether both women, or one of them, were demons, since, unlike in the previous tale, they do not change their appearance, both of

them possess supernatural characteristics, like invisibility to others, and frightening appearance; the woman's anger here has terrible consequences, as a result of which the male protagonist of the tale dies soon after the events take place. Addressed to a male figure, the female anger in the tale leads to death of the one, who caused it. Another motif of the tale is the jealous wife; due to her jealousy, Tosuke loses his life. The didactic part of the tale warns: "Jealousy is characteristic to a woman. A husband with a suspicious wife would meet misfortune as Tosuke did" (99). In other words, the text depicts two unwanted traits, which a woman should avoid: anger and jealousy, and condemns both of them as harmful for a man. Whereas jealousy is attributed to the ordinary woman, anger has more supernatural expressions, and is being attributed to the female demon.

However, female anger in the Japanese folklore is not necessarily restricted to the angry spirits and demons; it is met among ordinary women as well. A comic tale, from the *Konjaku Tales*, which opens Chapter 28, "Secular Tales of Japan", tells about a man, who does not recognize his wife in a beauty he meets near the Inari Shrine (138). The woman, who is unescorted and dressed in a "dark violet robe over layers of undergarments in reddish purple and light green" (138), that is, with a great taste, and colors of nobility, may resemble the woman on the bridge from the tale 27:13. However, later she is revealed as being the protagonist's jealous wife, who, under a disguise, charms her husband. Anger, expressed in this tale by the woman, is more comic, than frightening, although it carries elements of violence (even though it, too, carries certain elements of comedy), when the "angry wife" grabs the husband's topknot under his hat and slaps his cheek "so hard that the sound even echoed through the mountain" (139). Jealousy and anger, two motifs, are tied together in the tale, the first one causing the latter. Although the wife, still feeling angry, threatens the husband to break his legs (140), the couple eventually reunites and lives together happily.

The last tale from the *Konjaku Tales*, which I will mention here, contains both comical and supernatural elements; the agent of anger, being an ordinary woman, nevertheless possesses a demonic air about her. Tale 31:10 tells about a man, who used to visit secretly from

his wife a mistress in another province. When the wife learned about the mistress, her "color changed...and she became mad from jealousy" (333). The husband managed to visit his mistress, but, in the middle of the night, sleeping in her chamber, the mistress dreamed that his wife runs into the room, shouting and abusing him with "terms too vulgar to mention" (334). The wife jumps on the couple, trying to separate them, and then the protagonist wakes up. Frightened husband returns home and meets his wife. Seeing her, he cannot help but think: "How frightening she is!" (334), while she accuses him of adultery, which she apparently saw in a dream the night before, and her hair stands up at one moment and lays down in the next moment (334). The wife is depicted as being frightening in her fury; she possesses some elements of the female demons as they were described in the previous tales: her hair standing up (similar to tale 27:13), and she is having a vision of her husband with another woman. The tale, in which the woman has a dream about her rival, echoes the episode in *The Tale of Genji*, where Lady Rokujo dreams about having a fight with Aoi, Genji's wife. Ironically, whereas in the tale the wife dreams of the lover, in the novel the lover has a dream about the wife. The constant element remains the same: the jealous woman, furious in her anger, against the unfaithful man and the other woman. The tale contains motifs of both female jealousy and anger, which appear to be tightly connected in the discourse of relationships in many Japanese texts. In addition, it contains elements of both comedy and horror, which we saw in the previous tales, which were dealing with the subject.

In the chapter "Things That Have Lost Their Power" of the *Pillow Book*, Sei-Shonagon writes: "A woman, who is angry with her husband about some trifling matter, leaves home and goes somewhere to hide. She is certain that he will rush about looking for her; but he does nothing of the kind and shows the most infuriating indifference. Since she cannot stay away forever, she swallows her pride and returns."

In this passage a woman's anger is by no means powerful. On the contrary, it reveals her powerlessness, and lack of influence on the husband; yet, the fact, that it was expected to influence a man denotes that initially female anger carried some power with it. A woman who ex-

pected that the husband would fall under influence of her angry actions, is frustrated, since her anger has not had any influence, and is harmful not for the husband, but for the woman herself.

6. Anger in the *Kagero Diary*

Perhaps, the angriest female text of the Heian period is *The Kagero Diary*, a confession of a woman, who needed to express herself because of her anger and suffering. One can easily define the writing this diary "an act of sublimation": transforming her anger and frustration into a literary work, the author succeeded creating one of the masterpieces of Japanese Literature. However, even the sublimation, that lasted almost twenty years, could not suppress all the anger she held in herself: it is often expressed on the pages of the diary, implicitly or explicitly.

Edward Seidensticker in his introduction to *The Gossamer Years by Michitsuna no Haha* (1973) claims that Kagero's "resentment against Kaneie and her venomous rage at her rivals form the base and many of the high points of the diary" (9).

Those are reflections of a woman, who experienced jealousy, feelings of neglect and anger, for almost twenty years of unhappy marriage. Her expectations from her husband were unusual for the Heian period, since she barely tolerated his affairs, wishing a husband who would be present "thirty days and thirty nights of a month", and her outbursts of anger and jealousy she recorded in the diary she kept writing for many years. Although being married to one of the most influential men of the time, the author sees in this not an opportunity for her own promotion, but an unfortunate circumstances, which dictated, that she saw less and less of her husband. Perhaps, one of the happiest years of her life, as it is recorded in the diary, is when Fujiwara no Kaneie, the husband, gets one of the worst positions in his career.

Although anger is probably present throughout most of the text, it should be noted that the year when the author openly expresses her feelings, is the second year of Tenroku (971 AC), the year when the resentment and frustration reached their peak and Michit-

sun's mother decided to leave the world and to become a Buddhist nun. When in the first day of the New Year Kaneie neglects her and, contrary to the usual custom, does not pay a visit, she suppresses her emotions, since it was unlucky to start a New Year in anger.

A few months later, when Kaneie finally pays a visit to Kagero, his nonchalant manner irritates her and provokes her to begin "pouring out all the resentment" she had stored up for a long time (Seidensticker, p. 95). The husband seems unmoved by the sudden outburst, pretending to sleep. The same scene repeats itself several times, although Kagero is not always able to express her resentment due to the conditions of the house, which is crowded with servants (97). However, Kaneie continues to neglect his spouse, and in the fifth month of the same year he and his escort pass several times by his wife's house, never paying a visit:

"The gaudy procession went by once more. There was a great clamor as it approached my gate. I was just going through my prayers. Again my people got ready for him, and again I waited tensely, expecting the worst. And the procession moved off without even a nod for us. My people stared dumbly at one another, and I was unable to collect myself for the better part of the day.

"What can he be thinking of?" someone remarked tearfully.

"It is indeed unfortunate", I answered, with an effort at composure. "I have been subjected to this because I allowed myself to be kept here. I should have gone away as I wanted to long ago". My anger and chagrin quite passed description."

In attempt to break free from the constant frustration and from the disappointing marriage, the narrator retreats to the Narutaki monastery, but her husband manages to take her out of the monastery before she takes up vows. The end of the second book is imbued by realization of the wife's helplessness, and her passivity against the husband's actions. Her peak of action, borne by anger and resentment, is her retreat to the monastery. Anger is the factor, which turns the author into the active figure that we can glimpse in the events she records. Due to her resentment of Kaneie, Kagero begins to act, her mobility being one of the consequences of the action. However, mobility, an-

ger and ability to act were features, restricted to men, whereas women had to be passive and immobile. Kaneie, who suddenly faces the consequences of his wife's anger, feels it is necessary to bring her back to the feminine mode of conduct, since the fact that she is taking the active role, may negatively impact his own reputation. He goes after Kagero and with their son's aid, manipulates her to leave the monastery.

The motif of anger and resentment, although present throughout the diary, is the most conspicuous in the second part of the book. In the Heian discourse female anger was seen as something unwanted, threatening and frightful. In the tales it has mystical representations, and in the novels it may kill others. In the diaries and texts, which are less fictional, female anger is helpless, but still ruthlessly repressed by men. As well as the wife, described in *The Pillow Book*, Kagero is led to take some actions because of her anger. And like the former, the latter is convinced in the meaninglessness of her actions, and therefore also the meaninglessness of her anger, and therefore she returns to the usual passiveness, letting her husband and son take her back to the city. Following the failed retreat, the Mother of Michitsuna returns home, and this symbolizes the end of the second book. The third book lacks the emotional intensity of the second part of the diary, merely describing various events in the author's life. Her marriage is still unhappy, but the author seems to accept that as a fact. There are almost no outbursts of anger in the last book, and the marriage fades away slowly as the years pass by.

In this section of the paper I have dealt with the notion of anger as it is represented in the various texts from Heian period. The main point of those texts was to illustrate the evil sides of female anger. First, it was dangerous for the society, family and the woman herself. In the fictional texts, the anger carries supernatural characteristics, whereas in the diaries and essays it is described with irony and emphasizes a woman's helplessness and passiveness. A female anger in those texts is not a constant and steady feeling; it comes in outbursts, leaving the woman afterwards in worse situation than before, and disappears quickly, making the woman retreat back to the accepted social boundaries, that is, back to being to figure of a wife and a mother. In

many of the texts, presented above, anger is accompanied by a period of activity, when a woman performs various acts, which are often presented as meaningless and ridiculous (biting fingers, retreating to monasteries, running from home etc). A woman, who took an active role, jeopardized her husband's masculinity, since it meant that the husband could not control his wife, such as the husband from the tale 28:1 from the *Konjaku Tales* collection. The cultural conventions dictated certain boundaries for women, and trespassing those boundaries was labeled as ridiculous and was discouraged, since it threatened the social position of those, who held the power in their hands.

7. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show the historical and social factors, which contributed to the negative image of female anger in Heian period Japan. I have examined the subject of anger as it is reflected in the gender discourse, and analyzed various Heian's texts, such as diaries, novels and folklore tales. As I noted in the beginning of this paper, the examples, which are brought here, describe what was considered to be the exceptional or rather, an appropriate behavior of a woman in the Heian period. Encouraged to repress their anger, women mostly succeeded in this uneasy task; however, sometimes the emotions took over them, leading them to actions; those could be acts of aggression, such as the cases depicted in *The Tale of Genji*, or act of writing, documented in *The Kagero Diary*. In any case, anger was the drive that initiated these actions.

In my study I showed how the image of female anger reflected in various writings, beginning from the diary of a Japanese upper class woman, to the Japanese folk tales. I showed various consequences, which female anger was believed to bring upon its agent, as well as on the object. I analyzed the features, related to the anger, such as its being restricted mainly to the high-status, high-power individuals, and its supernatural appearances in the folk tales.

Although I focused mostly on the issue of female anger versus the image of an ideal femininity, I did not go further in the attempt to

show, how anger influenced the female writing during the Heian period. I will deepen my argument further in my studies and relate to this issue as I study more about the Heian literature.

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