

Monika DIX

Hachikazuki

Revealing Kannon's Crowning Compassion in Muromachi Fiction

The corpus of late-medieval Japanese fiction contains various stories about the benefits and favors obtained through devotion to the bodhisattva Kannon. One of these stories is *Hachikazuki*, which features a young heroine who, following her parents' prayers, is conceived through the divine intervention of Kannon. The girl loses her mother at an early age, is stigmatized by a bowl that her mother has placed inverted upon her head, and undergoes a series of hardships and sufferings. Eventually, the bowl miraculously falls off, and the story culminates in the heroine's happy marriage and the universal recognition of her virtues. I discuss the significance of the bowl as a narrative trope in *Hachikazuki* in order to illuminate its function as a physical symbol of Kannon's active compassion and divine protection. Kannon seems to be largely absent throughout the narrative, especially in the episodes where the heroine overcomes her suffering thanks to the saving power of the bowl. I argue that the bowl indicates Kannon's benevolent presence throughout the entire story. Therefore, the bowl not only serves as a regenerative space where Hachikazuki can overcome the trauma of her early childhood loss, but it also bridges the gap between orthodox doctrinal and popular vernacular representations of Kannon.

KEYWORDS: *otogizōshi*—*Hachikazuki*—*mamako mono*—*setsuwa*—Kannon—bowl—compassion—divine protection

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THE STORY *Hachikazuki* 鉢かづき (The bowl bearer) is the tale of a young girl who suffers various hardships because she is stigmatized by a bowl that has become firmly attached to her head.¹ In the end, however, it is through the bowl that she achieves fame, fortune, and aristocratic status. *Hachikazuki* is one of some four hundred works of short Muromachi fiction that together constitute the literary genre known today as *otogizōshi* お伽草子, or “companion booklets.”² According to Ichiko Teiji’s classification of *otogizōshi* by subject matter and theme, *Hachikazuki* falls into the category of *kuge mono* 公家物 (aristocratic tales) under the subdivision of *mamako mono* 継子物 (stepchild tales), because the narrative deals with the ill fortune, suffering, and happy ending in the life of a stepchild (ICHIKO 1968, 17). This subject has a long tradition which dates back to thirteenth-century collections of *setsuwa* 説話 such as *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 (Collection of tales of Uji), and to late tenth-century romances such as *Ochikubo monogatari* 落窪物語 (Tale of the sunken room), *Utsuho monogatari* 宇津保物語 (Tale of the hollow tree), and *Sumiyoshi monogatari* 住吉物語 (Tale of Sumiyoshi). In these stories, a stepmother torments the stepdaughter out of jealousy and expels her from home. As a result, the stepdaughter experiences hardship and suffering, but in the end, through the divine intervention of a deity, she marries a noble suitor and lives happily ever after.

In addition, *Hachikazuki* is also classified under *shomin mono* 庶民物 (tales of commoners) because it resembles many of the success stories in volume sixteen of the twelfth-century *setsuwa* collection *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (Collection of tales of times now past), particularly those associated with the mercy of the bodhisattva Kannon (KANDA and NISHIZAWA 2002, 865).³ *Konjaku monogatari shū* is believed to have been compiled by a Buddhist lay monk of

1. *Hachi* 鉢 means “bowl,” and *kazuki* かづき is the noun form of the verb かづく, “to put something on one’s head.” *Hachikazuki* is the name of the heroine as well as the title of the story. *Hachikazuki* is typeset in NKBT 38: 58–85. For a complete English translation, see STEVEN 1977.

2. Muromachi short stories such as *Hachikazuki* owe their present-day popularity to the Osaka bookseller and publisher Shibukawa Seiemon, who collected and published them under the title *Goshūgen otogi bunko* 御祝言御伽文庫 (The wedding companion library) in the eighteenth century. In the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) and after, more Muromachi short stories were collected and published under the classification of *otogizōshi* (ICHIKO 1968, 17).

3. For example, Chieko Irie MULHERN (1974, 184) gives a detailed description of *otogizōshi* classifications based on subject matter and theme.

aristocratic rank who was familiar with the classic literary tradition and the life of commoners. Although we do not know much about the size, type, or location of the audience for these tales, the reappearance of themes from *Konjaku monogatari shū* in collections from subsequent eras— such as the miracle tales of the Hasedera Kannon'in. Muromachi-period *otogizōshi* like *Hachikazuki*—attests to their popularity and transmission to later generations (SHIMURA 1974, 42).

Hachikazuki begins by introducing the heroine's parents, who, after ardent prayers to the Hasedera Kannon, miraculously conceive a daughter.⁴ Shortly thereafter, the mother falls ill. Just before she passes away, she places a box on her daughter's head and covers it with a bowl, which becomes firmly attached to the girl's head; this is the reason why she is called *Hachikazuki*. The father remarries, but the stepmother's jealousy and false accusations against *Hachikazuki* force him to expel his daughter from home. *Hachikazuki* wanders aimlessly and tries to commit suicide by jumping into a river, but the bowl saves her by keeping her head afloat. It is also the bowl that attracts the attention of a middle captain who hires her as a fire-tender for his bathhouse. The middle captain's youngest son, Saishō, falls in love with *Hachikazuki* in spite of her affliction, and when he tells her that his love for her is greater than his family ties, the bowl miraculously falls off and reveals not only *Hachikazuki*'s beauty, but also various treasures that are hidden underneath it. The story ends with the happy marriage of *Hachikazuki* and Saishō, and the reunification of *Hachikazuki* with her father.

Like similar *mamako mono otogizōshi*, such as *Hanayo no hime* 花世の姫 (The flower princess) and *Ubakawa* 姥皮 (The old woman's skin), in which the heroine is given a garment as a sign of Kannon's benevolence and divine protection, *Hachikazuki* advocates faith in Kannon and illustrates how the deity grants the stepdaughter protagonist both protection and wealth (OKADA 1966, 50–61).⁵ However, there is one distinct difference that sets *Hachikazuki* apart: unlike the garment in *Hanayo no hime* and *Ubakawa*, the bowl that is attached to *Hachikazuki*'s head cannot be taken off, and it obstructs the heroine's vision—both in a physical and a spiritual sense. Moreover, the bowl causes the protagonist extreme hardship and suffering before it eventually bestows her with good for-

4. Hasedera 長谷寺, also known as Chōkokuji, is a branch temple of the Buzan school of the Shingon sect and is located in Nara Prefecture. It was originally built in 720 and houses an eleven-headed statue of the bodhisattva Kannon that is believed to be particularly responsive to peoples' prayers. DYKSTRA (1976, 117) has discussed the relationship between Kannon worship and Hasedera in *Hasedera Kannon genki* 長谷寺観音験記 (Miraculous records of the Hasedera Kannon).

5. Similar stories of poor young women who pray to Kannon for the improvement of their condition are found in *Konjaku monogatari shū*, *Uji shūi monogatari*, *Hasedera Kannon genki*, and *Shaseki shū*.

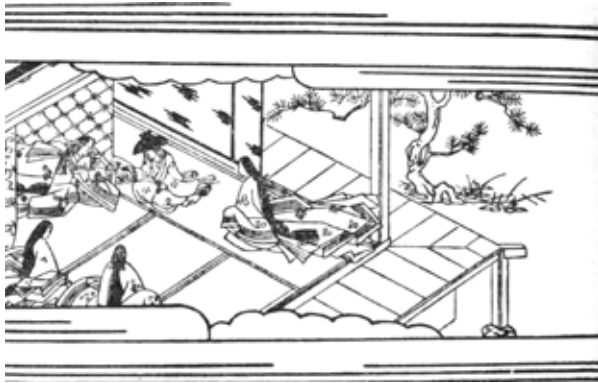


FIGURE 1. Hachikazuki's head covered by a bowl. *Hachikazuki*, Edo period, ink on paper, 17 x 23cm. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

tune and wealth. This mysterious contradiction marks the bowl as an expedient means, or *hōben* 方便, of the bodhisattva.⁶

Hachikazuki is a complex tale, amenable to a host of interpretations concerning various aspects of Kannon's mercy. However, not much attention has been given to the function of the bowl as a symbol of Kannon's compassionate protection. Hachikazuki's mother calls upon Kannon in the beginning of the story, and the narrator praises Kannon in the closing passage of the tale. However, Kannon appears to be largely absent throughout the main narrative where the heroine overcomes her suffering thanks to the saving power of the bowl. I argue that the bowl's magical adherence to Hachikazuki's head indicates Kannon's presence and divine protection throughout the entire story. The bowl not only functions as a regenerative space where Hachikazuki can overcome the suffering she experiences as a young girl, but it also bridges orthodox doctrinal and popular vernacular representations of Kannon. It does this by portraying Kannon as a friendly, accessible, and personal deity who has a strong bond to Hachikazuki, and not just as an impersonal savior. Therefore, the bowl trope emphasizes the explicit and implicit Buddhist teachings in *Hachikazuki* and integrates them into the listener's field of vision and knowledge.

In *Hachikazuki*, the bowl plays a central role in the life and identity of the heroine because it symbolizes Hachikazuki's ties both to her deceased mother

6. In Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine, great emphasis is placed upon the "two wings of enlightenment," wisdom (*prajñā*) and compassion (*karūna*). It is the latter that requires the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to devise numerous methods and teachings to deliver sentient beings from suffering. These liberative techniques are broadly known as "expedient means" (Jp. *hōben*; Skt. *upāya*). See SCHROEDER 2001, 3.

and to her guardian deity Kannon. The opening passage tells us that the heroine's parents longed to have a child, and that the girl was miraculously conceived through Kannon's divine intervention:

Despite their happy marriage they grieved about not having a child. Then miraculously one day they were blessed with a daughter and were overcome with joy. They treasured her and took infinite care of her. They prayed to Kannon day and night, made pilgrimages to Hasedera, and prayed for their daughter's prosperity.⁷ (NKBT 38: 58)

As the story continues, a couple of years pass and Hachikazuki reaches the age of thirteen. Her mother lies dying on her deathbed, and just before she breathes her last she calls her daughter to her bedside and laments:

Oh, what a pity! I wish I could see you grow up until you are seventeen or eighteen and see you get married, so that I can die in peace. How worried I am to part from you when you are still so young and your future is so uncertain. (NKBT 38: 59)

While trying to restrain her tears, the mother places a small box on her daughter's head, covers it with a bowl (FIGURE 1),⁸ and then recites the following poem:

Sashimogusa ⁹	Oh Kannon,	
fukaku zo tanomu	all sentient beings	
Kanzeon	have deep faith in you.	
chikai no mama ni	Pledging my oath to you,	
itadakasenuru	I place it on her head.	(NKBT 38:59)

The mother's words clearly indicate that because she is no longer able to care for her young daughter after she has passed away, she entrusts her into the care of the bodhisattva Kannon.

Regarding this particular aspect of the story, *Hachikazuki* differs from other *mamako mono* in which the dying mother entrusts her young daughter to the care of her husband—the girl's father—as shown in the following excerpt from *Chūjōhime* 中将姫 (The daughter of the Middle Captain):

If there is one thing a person should never have it is a child. Now, here I am trying to recite the *nenbutsu* with a single-steady heart to facilitate my birth in the Pure Land, but all I can keep thinking about is my child. If nothing else,

7. Except where otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

8. At this point in the narrative we are not told about the contents or purpose of this small box. The contents are revealed only at the end of the story when the bowl falls off.

9. *Sashimogusa* さしも草, also known as *yomogi* 蓬, is a wild grass that grows throughout Japan. Its name can also signify "sentient beings" (NKBT 38: 59).

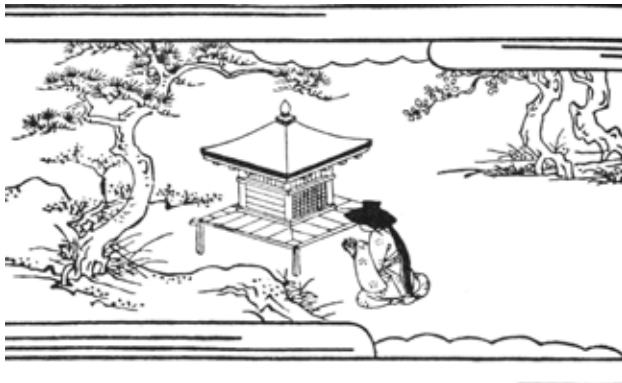


FIGURE 2. Hachikazuki praying at her mother's grave. *Hachikazuki*, Edo period, ink on paper, 17x23cm. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

promise me not to show the child to anybody until she is twenty years old, and I will be happy. However, if you do not obey my wish, I will hate you for it from my grave.¹⁰ (MJMT 9: 271)

Why does the mother in *Hachikazuki* release her daughter into the care of the bodhisattva Kannon rather than into that of her husband? I propose that the answer to this question is the bowl which the mother places on Hachikazuki's head, particularly its function as a protective charm that both shields the girl from the world and obscures her view of it. As evident from the previously cited passage in *Hachikazuki*, the mother cannot free herself from her attachment to her young daughter, which keeps her worried even at the moment of death. This attachment is embodied by the bowl, which becomes attached to the girl's head. Even after Hachikazuki's mother has passed away, the bowl serves as a living reminder of the mother's love, nurture, and attachment. Like a caring mother, the bowl—a physical symbol of Kannon's divine compassion—is protecting Hachikazuki, guiding her through life, and helping her to overcome her suffering; it is a bond that won't break until Hachikazuki marries Saishō at the end of the story. In this sense, the bowl fulfills the mother's last request to Kannon of entrusting her daughter into the care of the deity to keep her safe. Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine centers on the intimate relationship between wisdom and compassion. According to Mahāyāna thought, the Buddha's enlightenment culminates in the realization that human beings differ and that he must, therefore, teach according to the relative emotional, intellectual, and spiritual dispositions of his audience.

10. Translated from the sixteenth-century *nara ehon* 奈良絵本 (picture book) in the possession of Hiroshima University Library, typeset in MJMT 9: 270–85.

This concept of “expedient means,” not only connects the Buddha’s enlightenment to the “everyday” world, but also reveals the compassionate wisdom of a great bodhisattva who responds to the sufferings of all sentient beings. If the mother would have entrusted Hachikazuki into the care of her father—which is characteristic of most *mamako mono*—she would not have put the bowl on the girl’s head, and the effect of Kannon’s “crowning compassion,” so to speak, would have been lost. However, at the same time, the bowl also symbolizes Hachikazuki’s attachment to her mother. She longs for her dead mother, visits her grave, and recites prayers in her honor.

In the corpus of *otogizōshi* there are numerous stories centering on a young girl who performs memorial services for her deceased mother, including *Chūjōhime*, *Sakurai monogatari* さくらみ物語 (The tale of Sakurai), and *Tsukihi no gohonji* 月日の御本地 (The sun and the moon in their original form; OKADA 2002, 14). In all of these stories the heroine’s attachment to her deceased mother causes her suffering: being slandered by the stepmother, being expelled from home, and being exposed to suffering and hardship. But eventually, the heroine gains insight into the cause of her misery, and it is precisely her realization of this that frees her from ignorance and attachment, as shown in the following excerpt from *Chūjōhime*:

“The reason why I encountered this misery is because of my stepmother’s profound hatred. How sad! If I were in the same world as my real mother, such misery would hardly occur. Though in this present life my fate is painful suffering, how I wish there were a way I could be born in a place where I would be free from suffering,” she thought. (MJMT 9: 277)

It is through self-realization that Chūjōhime understands that her stepmother’s jealousy is the real cause of her suffering.

However, *Hachikazuki* presents us with a different development in terms of the heroine’s attainment of knowledge and detachment: throughout the narrative Hachikazuki longs for her deceased mother. Literally and metaphorically speaking, Hachikazuki is “blinded” by the bowl which, according to the text, “covers her head and almost comes down to her shoulders” (NKBT 38: 60). Being firmly attached to Hachikazuki’s head and obstructing her view, the bowl emphasizes the girl’s ignorance about Kannon’s divine protection, as indicated by the following quote:

Heartbroken, Hachikazuki visited her mother’s grave and cried: “My sad world has become even sadder. Yearning for my mother, a stream of tears is running down my face, but I cannot drown myself in them and have to continue living with this worthless body of mine. I hate this monstrous thing which has become attached to my head. No wonder my stepmother hates me.”

(NKBT 38: 61)

Unlike Chūjōhime, Hachikazuki does not understand that the stepmother is the cause of her suffering. Instead, she blames the bowl for her stepmother's hatred. As for overcoming this ignorance, the *Lotus Sutra* explains that human beings need to follow the Buddhist Law and have faith in the Buddhist deities in order to free themselves from worldly attachment:

For those of dull capacities who delight in a little Law, who greedily cling to birth and death, who, despite the innumerable Buddhas, fail to practice the profound and wonderful way but are perplexed and confused by a host of troubles—for these I preach nirvana. I devise these expedient means and so cause them to enter into the Buddhist wisdom. (WATSON 1993, 34)

The bowl will eventually free Hachikazuki from her ignorance and suffering, and will be instrumental for the story's happy ending, thus fulfilling its function as an expedient device of the bodhisattva Kannon.

After having visited her mother's grave for the last time and having been expelled from her home in the capital due to her stepmother's slander, Hachikazuki wanders aimlessly through the countryside. At one point, she recites a poem:

no no sue no	At the end of a wild field	
michi fumiwakete	I make my way through the thicket,	
izuku to mo	but where shall I go?	
sashite yukinan	I never thought to find myself	
mi to wa omowazu	wandering aimlessly.	(NKBT 38: 62)

Narratives of stepchildren who have been exiled from home are common among *otogizōshi*. They tend to focus on the physical and emotional struggles of the heroine, who, following her banishment into exile, wanders in remote lonely places and is eventually rewarded with salvation, deification, or a happy marriage. The theme of the “exiled and wandering noble” (*kishu ryūritan* 貴種流離譚) was first identified in 1924 by the Japanese ethnologist Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953) in his book *Nihon bungaku no hassei* 日本文学の発生 (The emergence of Japanese literature). According to Orikuchi, the concept of the “exiled and wandering noble” provided an important link connecting the earliest stories of the gods, as found in the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Record of ancient matters), with the growth of an indigenous Japanese literary tradition, linking mythology with historical and literary narratives (ORIKUCHI 1995, 297).

Orikuchi suggests that stories (*tan* 譚) centering on the “exiled and wandering noble” all consist of three distinct narrative elements: 1) a hero or heroine of high or divine birth (*kishu* 貴種), 2) the theme of exile or wandering (*ryūri* 流離), and 3) the remote location of this exile at the margins, tracing a movement of the protagonist from the center to the margin (ORIKUCHI 1995, 298). Therefore, Orikuchi considers the trope of the “exiled and wandering noble” to be a

key element for the interpretation of stories narrating the sorrow of gods and noble heroes who find themselves confined to the margins far away from the heavenly and courtly centers.

All these characteristic features of the “exiled and wandering noble” are present in the tale of *Hachikazuki*—a heroine of divine birth, the heroine’s banishment from the capital to exile in the remote countryside, and her suffering and sadness in the human world—and enhance the function of the bowl as a physical symbol of Kannon’s divine protection. After *Hachikazuki* wanders aimlessly for a while, she comes to a river bank. Looking at the flowing river, she thinks that instead of wandering and suffering, she should drown herself in order to join her dead mother in the afterworld:

But when *Hachikazuki* looked at the river, the big waves frightened her. The waves in the shallow waters were rough and capped with white foam, while the deep water made her shudder. With the weakness of youth, she first hesitated out of fear, but then the thought of being reunited with her mother helped her to overcome her anxiety, and she uttered the following verse:

kawagishi no	On the river banks
yanagi no ito no	where the willow branches
hitosuji nihang	in single strands,
omoikiru mi o	I resign to the fate of this body—
kami mo tasukeyo	oh, gods rescue me. (NKBT 38: 63)

She throws herself into the river, but the bowl on her head brings her up to the surface. A fisherman sees this and thinks, “how strange that a bowl is floating along all by itself” (NKBT 38:63). When he fishes it out of the river, he sees that it has a human body attached to it. In his surprise, he tosses the bowl onto the river bank. After a while, when *Hachikazuki* realizes that she is still alive, she recites this poem:

kawanami no	I wonder
soko ni kono mi no	why my body
tomarekashi	might have risen again
nado futatabi wa	and stayed
ukiagariken	on the surface of the river waves. (NKBT 38: 63)

The first poem emphasizes *Hachikazuki*’s attachment to her mother; all she wants to do is to end her suffering, for which she blames the bowl, so that she can be reunited with her mother in the afterworld. Interestingly, at the moment she throws herself into the river, *Hachikazuki* asks the gods to rescue her, and her pledge is answered by Kannon’s compassion, which is embodied by the bowl. Literally, the term *hitosuji ni* 一筋に means “in a single line,” and it functions as a *kakekotoba* in the poem, referring to the “single strands” of branches hanging from the willow

trees, as well as to the Buddhist concept of *ichinengi* 一念義 (single thought/single recitation). On the one hand, the Buddhist concept of *ichinengi* means that a person has *shinjin* 信心 (sincere faith) for salvation. On the other hand, as in the writings of the Pure Land monk Kōsai 幸西 (1163–1247), when a person experiences *ichinengi*, the mind of the individual is mysteriously matched with the mind of the Buddha in what appears to be a mystical union (NAKAMURA 1981, 51–52). Like the willow branches, Hachikazuki's existence hangs by a single strand, and all she can do to escape from her suffering is to entrust herself to the care of the gods.

However, Hachikazuki's second poem clearly indicates that she does not understand the true reason for her fate. Hachikazuki remains ignorant about Kannon's divine protection and wisdom, and it is the bowl's function as a magical charm to help the heroine overcome this ignorance. Blinded by both the bowl and her worldly attachment, Hachikazuki does not realize that she is a *mōshigo* 申子 (a child granted by the gods in response to a childless couple's prayers) and has the divine protection of Kannon, which is the reason why the bowl rescues her from drowning. The concept of *mōshigo*, which is rooted in ancient myths of marriages between gods and human beings, appears to have been very popular in medieval Japanese *setsuwa* and *otogizōshi* (SHIMAUCHI 1991, 55). In tales like *Hachikazuki*, a wealthy but childless couple prays to the bodhisattva Kannon for a child, and the child born as a result of their prayers is a *mōshigo*. The *mōshigo* embodies the Buddhist concept of *wakō dōjin* 和光同塵, which translates as “dimming the light and mixing in the dust,” and refers to the manner of salvation in which Buddhas and bodhisattvas conceal their true forms in order to meet sentient beings and lead them to salvation (TOKUDA 1976, 297). According to TOKUDA (1976, 298), if the term *mōshigo* is substituted for “bodhisattva” in the following passage, the meaning of *mōshigo* becomes clear:

When a bodhisattva comes to our land, he always borrows the form of a human being, becomes one with sentient beings, experiences suffering, and tastes good and evil. After this, he becomes a god and bestows the masses of this evil world with benefits.
(*Shintōshū* 神道集 5: 34, in OKAMI 1988)

The *mōshigo*, who is part human and part divine, is always a privileged figure chosen to fulfill a sacred destiny. At the same time, however, the *mōshigo* must be a human being with some limitations to its power, for a god would be able to easily surmount any kind of suffering and hardship. Therefore, Hachikazuki, being a *mōshigo*, is experiencing this struggle with hardship as indicated in the previous two poems.

But the bowl eventually causes Hachikazuki's fate to change for the better. It is because of the bowl in particular that she attracts the attention of the Middle Captain of Yamakage, who hires her as a fire tender for his bathhouse (FIGURE 3). But

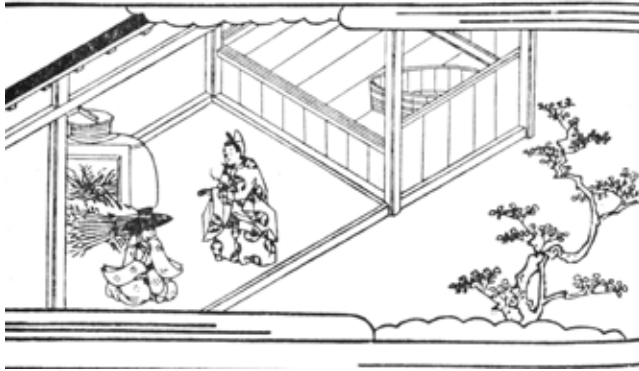


FIGURE 3. Hachikazuki working as a fire tender. *Hachikazuki*, Edo period, ink on paper, 17x23cm. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

Hachikazuki is still longing for her dead mother and lamenting her bowl-headed body. Due to her affliction, most people she encounters ridicule her appearance:

When the people saw her, they shouted, “What kind of monstrous thing is this? It has the head of a bowl and the body of a human being. Maybe it is an old bowl which has been bewitched and is still stuck on the head of the apparition. It is not a human being, that is for sure.” They pointed and laughed at her nervously.¹¹ (NKBT 38: 66)

One evening, while burning firewood in the bath house, she wonders how long she will have to endure living with the sorrow and hardship inflicted upon her by the bowl:

kurushiki wa	How painful,
oritaku shiba no	that smoke rising at evening
yūkeburi	from the brushwood fire—
uki mi to tomo ni	I wish my wretched, floating body
tachiya kiemashi	could disappear with the smoke. (NKBT 38: 66)

Uki mi うき身 is a pun and can mean both “a wretched body” and “a body afloat.” In the case of Hachikazuki, the “wretched body” refers to her unhappy life, her suffering, and people having pity on her, whereas the “body afloat” refers to the fact that the bowl is sustaining her life. It is precisely because of the bowl that Hachikazuki is hired as a fire tender in the bathhouse where she meets Saishō, which is the turning point that will lend this story a happy ending.

11. In Chinese and Japanese folk belief, a utensil could be possessed by a spirit, change its form, and bewitch people. [See Noriko REIDER’s article in this volume, 231–57]

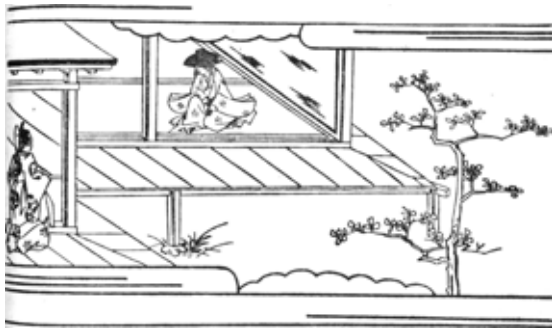


FIGURE 4. Saishō meets Hachikazuki. *Hachikazuki*, Edo period, ink on paper, 17x23cm. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

The Middle Captain of Yamakage has four sons, three of whom are married. His fourth son, Saishō, is very handsome. One night, Saishō goes to the bathhouse alone. He asks Hachikazuki to bring him hot water to wash his back (FIGURE 4). Upon seeing Hachikazuki for the first time, Saishō thinks:

I have met many people, but I have never met such a beautiful and charming young woman like her. One year I visited the capital during cherry blossom season, and I was flower-viewing at Omuro temple, where people of all ranks come together in front of the temple gate, but I have never seen anyone comparable to Hachikazuki.¹² In spite of people ridiculing her, I am not able to forget about her. (NKBT 38: 67–68)

The next night, Saishō visits Hachikazuki and declares his love, saying:

Hachikazuki, I have fallen in love with you, and whereas the color of the crimson may fade, my feelings for you will never change. (NKBT 38: 69)

Since Hachikazuki does not respond to Saishō's pledge, he is afraid that she might have another lover, and he says:

I hope your love is not like the Tatsuta River.¹³ Like a silent *kuchinashi* flower, you do not answer me.¹⁴ Or like a lute which often has more than one player, you may have another lover. (NKBT 38: 69)

12. Omuro temple 御室寺, also known as Ninnaji 仁和寺, is located in Kyoto and was founded in 888. It is a famous place for viewing cherry blossoms in the spring.

13. The Tatsuta River 竜田川 is located in Ikoma-gun, Nara prefecture. Saishō invokes it as a reference to poem # 283 in the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collections of poems ancient and modern, 905), where the name of the river is employed as an allusion to the breaking up of a love affair.

14. *Kuchinashi* 口無し literally means "without a mouth," referring to Hachikazuki's silence. It is also the alternative popular name of the Cape Jasmine flower.

In response, Hachikazuki sadly answers:

You compare me to a lute, but since all my strings are broken, there cannot be another player. I always feel sad, thinking about my mother whom I lost when I was very young. I regret that I have to remain in this unhappy world, unable even to become a nun. (NKBT 38: 69–70)

Then Saishō replies:

Life in this transient and fleeting world is indeed uncertain. Not knowing what kind of sufferings we must endure because of our previous karma, we live in resentment of the gods and Buddhas for subjecting us to such hardship. In your past life, you must have caused grief by separating lovers, the same way as one would by breaking off young branches from a tree, so that you are separated from your mother and suffer while you are still young. As for myself, I am already twenty but not married, and it seems that I have been lonely because I loved you deeply in my past life. Finally, I have found you and I am destined to love you in this life. (NKBT 38: 70)

Both Hachikazuki and Saishō are suffering because of their worldly attachments. Hachikazuki is unable to break free from the bond to her deceased mother, which is the reason why she was expelled from home, why she wandered aimlessly, why she was chosen to work in the bathhouse, and why she does not believe that Saishō's love for her is real. After all, she considers herself to be nothing more than a monstrous creature, due to the bowl attached to her head. By saying that "all my strings are broken," she indicates that there is nothing that she can offer him, and that her life is full of sorrow. Saishō is obligated to his family because it is his duty as the youngest son to marry a girl who is at least as beautiful and talented as his brother's wives, not some strange creature whose face is hidden by a bowl.

When Saishō proves to Hachikazuki that his love for her is stronger than his ties to his family, the bowl suddenly falls off her head. At this moment he sees that her face is as beautiful as the full moon. However, most importantly, the bowl reveals various treasures that were hidden in the box that Hachikazuki's mother had placed beneath the bowl, including two golden sake cups, a silver sake jug, an orange tree with three golden oranges, and a silver *kenpo no nashi*,¹⁵ a court lady's kimono, a crimson skirt, and other precious things (FIGURE 5).

As one might imagine, scholars have noted similarities between *Hachikazuki* and the *Cinderella* story (MULHERN 1979), but the bowl in *Hachikazuki* functions very differently from Cinderella's glass shoe. Naturally, in *Cinderella* the nobleman falls in love with the most beautiful and talented woman. Only later

15. *Kenpo no nashi* けんぽの梨 (Hovenia dulcis), the fruits of which are edible, was believed to have come from Mt. Kenpo in China where immortals and divine beings are said to reside.

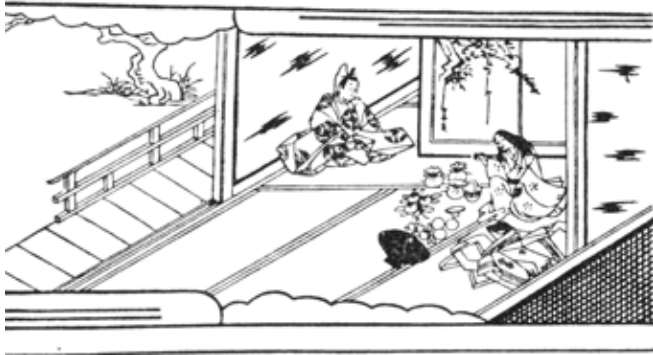


FIGURE 5. The bowl falls off Hachikazuki's head and reveals its treasures. *Hachikazuki*, Edo period, ink on paper, 17x23cm. Courtesy of Waseda University Library.

does he discover that she is not a princess, as is the case with Cinderella. But in *Hachikazuki*, the situation is different: in spite of Hachikazuki's deformed body, Saishō falls in love with her and only later discovers that her beauty and skill exceed those of his brother's wives. Like a hidden Buddha image (*hibutsu* 秘仏) that is suddenly revealed, the *mōshigo* Hachikazuki now appears before Saishō and his family as a veritable goddess in human form:

His parents thought that the wives of their three elder sons were beautiful, but next to her, they looked liked devils and infidels seated in front of a Buddha.

(NKBT 38: 73)

Therefore, unlike all the other people who see Hachikazuki as a monstrous creature and ridicule her for the bowl on her head, Saishō is not deceived. His vision of Hachikazuki is not obstructed by the bowl. He understands that all things are empty, and that attachment is the source of human suffering, as stated in the *Lotus Sutra*:

The World-Honored One has long expounded his doctrines and now must reveal the truth. I announce this to the assembly of voice-hearers and to those who seek the vehicle of the pratyekabuddha. I have enabled people to escape the bonds of suffering and to attain nirvana. The Buddha, through the power of expedient means, has shown them the teachings of the three vehicles, prying living beings loose from this or that attachment and allowing them to attain release.

(WATSON 1993, 26)

In conclusion, the concept of expedient means arises from the idea that wisdom is embodied in how one responds to others rather than as an abstract conception of the world, and reflects an ongoing concern with the soteriological

effectiveness of the Buddhist teachings, especially in medieval Japan. As we have seen, the bowl in *Hachikazuki* functions as a symbol of Kannon's active compassion and divine protection. I have shown that Kannon appears to be largely absent throughout the main narrative where the heroine overcomes her suffering thanks to the saving power of the bowl, but that the bowl's magical adherence to Hachikazuki's head indicates Kannon's presence and divine protection throughout the entire story. Therefore, similar to a kind of shield that protects one from the dangers and traumas of the outside world, the bowl serves as a cocoon-like a space in which the orphaned Hachikazuki can grow and mature—a regenerative space, one might say, where Hachikazuki can overcome the suffering she experiences as a child—while it also combines orthodox doctrinal and popular vernacular representations of Kannon. It does this by portraying Kannon as an accessible deity who has a close personal relationship with Hachikazuki, rather than as an impersonal and distant deity. The bowl trope emphasizes the explicit and implicit Buddhist teachings in *Hachikazuki* and integrates them into the listener's field of vision and knowledge.

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- NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 日本古典文学大系, *Otogizōshi* 御伽草子 38, ed. Ichiko Teiji 市古貞次. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1960.

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