

Old Japan Redux 2



Edited by X. Jie YANG
January 2016

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This is a collection of stories, manga and video from the final reports submitted to Japanese Civilization, fall 2015. Please enjoy the young creativity and imagination!

Smile

Cassandra Barlad

My father was a respected man; an official. His entire adult life was plagued with struggle and violence. He had gained supporters after a lot of hard work in order to increase the power of our family. The only reason he had fought so hard was because our family was defeated at the battle of Dan-no-Ura, by the Taira's.

Finally, the current emperor Go-Toba granted him the title of Shogun. This was a special moment for us. My father always spoke about how we, the Minamoto's, were meant to rule Japan. That we were robbed by the Taira's! At least that is what I hear.

"Finally, everything has fallen into place," that is what my father would tell me.

That was until today when he fell from his horse. They say it will be a miracle if the old man pulls through. If he dies, I am the next in line for shogun. I am not sure how I feel about ruling Japan...I spoke to my wife's father about it and we decided that he would help me through it.

As a child, I was often cared for by the Hiki's. I have always felt a special bond with the family, much stronger than with my own. So it was only natural that when the time came to marry, that I would marry a woman of the Hiki family. The strong bond I felt with them deepened the day I married Hiki no Tsubone. The bond I felt with the Hiki's was a pleasant contrast to my mother's family, the Hojo's, who did not seem to care for me. They favoured my younger brother, Sanetomo.

I walked through the corridors of our home; of course it was large and lavish, completely fitting for a shogun. The house was alive with people moving quickly, gathering items from all over: cloths, hot water, buckets; anything of use. Without a doubt they were trying desperately to save my father.

After some time, it was finally over. Everything slowed and the news came. Minamoto no Yoritomo, my father, was dead. A few servants congratulated me on my success, because I would become the new shogun.

At first, I felt clumsy and awkward in my new role, but once I got over the initial shock it became easier. Unfortunately, my mother continued to badger me. Advising me what to do in every situation, as if I actually needed her family's help. She shaved her head after my father's death (as expected) and calls herself a nun, yet she continues to stick her nose in politics.

They are getting more persistent and annoying. My grandfather and mother often say that I am too brash and bullheaded, and that everything I do is wrong. But Tsubone's family will do just fine in helping me make the right decisions. The Hiki family has always been there for me, and Tsubone's father, Yoshikazu has helped

me a great deal and continues to do so. I would prefer to discuss Japan with him. I cannot trust the Hojo's.

Speaking of Yoshikazu, he does not like my grandfather, but I cannot blame him. To be honest I am not very fond of him either, his favouritism for my brother is becoming increasingly apparent. He continuously tries to use his relationships to best me and gain a political advantage. Even though he is supposed to be my regent, it's disgusting! I can't take it! So I am meeting Yoshikazu tonight to discuss what we are going to do about my grandfather's insistent interruptions and attempts to position, Sanetomointo power.

I paused in front of the door to prepare myself for the discussion. This has to be done. Reaching forward I slid the screen to the side allowing myself passage. Quickly concealing my surprise that Yoshikazu was already there; I was early.

"Good evening, Yoshikazu." I spoke warmly as I found my seat across from him.

"Good evening, Yoriie. I assume that you are fully prepared for our meeting." The familiar voice called. It was serious and stern, much different from my own.

"Of course! But do you really think killing Sanetomo is the best idea?" My voice cracked, I knew what we had to do but it was disturbing to say it aloud.

I heard the floor boards creak outside the room. My heart raced. Did someone hear? I jumped to my feet and sprinted to open the door. No one was outside. When I returned to my seat Yoshikazu looked amused, but as quickly as I saw the expression, it was gone.

"Yes. This is the only way we can dominate the Hojo's and ensure that you maintain full control. I will have everything set up, and by next week your brother will no longer be a concern." I nodded my agreement solemnly.

Everything had been decided so Yoshikazu stood, straightened his clothing, and left the room. Leaving me alone to contemplate what was going to happen. It made my stomach churn. Who would want to have their brother murdered? If only they would back off, it would not have to be like this.

I readied myself to leave when my mother came in the room. Her expression was peculiar, as if she was trying to hide her emotions from me, but doing a terrible job. I thought that I should ask her what was wrong... but I can't say I really care.

With a final glance to my mother I left the room swiftly in order to avoid whatever advice she was about to offer. It was late and I could hear sleep calling me. As I entered my room my mother's face flashed into my mind, I am not sure if I imagined it but maybe she was angry.

I woke up to the sound of shuffling and running through the halls. Pulling myself together I stepped out of my room and the noise immediately intensified.

"What's going on?" I asked a servant fumbling around with a cloth and bucket.

"Good morning! I heard that Yoshikazu is being arrested! Something about plotting to kill your brother! Luckily they found out in time."

My blood ran cold. If they are arresting Yoshikazu, could I be next? I knew that I had heard someone outside the door last night! I could feel the sweat beading on my brow.

At that moment my mother came down the hall and ushered me back into the room. Her face was hard set, conveying nothing.

“Stay in here, I don’t want you getting into any more trouble! I heard you last night, but I did not tell anyone that you are involved. Let’s keep it that way.” Her voice was cold. I slowly nodded my head and proceeded to take a seat in the room. Satisfied that I was not intending to interfere she retreated from the room to deal with the chaos occurring outside.

By the afternoon my grandfather sentenced Yoshikazu to death. It was a terrible feeling; that he will die because he wanted to protect me. Obviously, Tsubone was devastated but we had to move on, we could not do anything unless I confessed to the crime.

The events following seemed like a blur and I soon began to feel ill, I assume it was from all the stress of Yoshikazu’s death and the Hojo’s breathing down my neck. This was all too much for me. I decided it will be best to take a break from all the craziness and go stay in Izu to recuperate.

Izu is peaceful, silent, and beautiful. My mother often came with me on these trips but she was too busy playing politics. The oddest thing was that once I got away from it all, I started to feel better... it was a good idea to come to Izu.

Every night, I loved to sit on the edge of the porch and look out over the garden. A small pond was amongst the trees towards the back of the property. Sitting here takes all the stress of the world away.

I was disappointed that my wife decided not to come with me on this trip. She didn’t want to interfere with my relaxation. She told me “just go sit on the porch like you always do and get better! I will see you soon.” I felt the smile grace my lips before a guttural sound escaped my throat.

Someone came from behind me, shoving a knife deep into my back. The pain was unbearable, like a trail of fire had spread from the wound consuming me. I think he was aiming for my heart, but I must have moved at the wrong moment. I would have preferred it to be quick.

A deep thud resonated through the floorboards beneath my body as I collapsed to the side. Blood pooled in my mouth jarring a cough from my form. I don’t know how much time passed but my attacker stood above me preparing to finish the job, I’m glad he was not going to allow me to bleed out. A bitter cold had already begun to creep up my extremities.

I didn’t want to see death coming! Allowing my head to fall to the side, I peered into the darkness, and across the pond I noticed the slightest movement. There stood my mother...she was smiling.



Cassandra Barlad is currently in her third year as a Zoology major and wants to study veterinary medicine. In addition to science, she has enjoyed studying Japanese language and culture.

Hino Tomiko and the Onin War

Justine Keefer

My name is Hino Tomiko, and they blame me for the start of the Onin War.

The year is 1455 and I am walking in the small garden behind my house in Yamashiro. Behind me runs a small river over some mossy green hills, and to my right stands a tall majestic cherry blossom tree. The flowers are in full bloom and they stand bursting and swelling, much like the anxiety that fills my belly. My father approaches me, "Tomiko, its time." He cannot make eye contact with me. Perhaps its because he knows of the reputation of the man I am leaving my home to marry. He is the 8th shogun of the Ashikaga line, and his mother is my great aunt. It is said he already has 3 daughters, despite just coming to the age of 20. At 16 this frightens me, how soon will it be that I am expected to have children? I look into my fathers face in hope that he will finally look at me, that he will see my fear and call it all off. I know this is a dream that is far-fetched and nearly impossible, but I must try. I never considered myself a fearful child, but I am truly afraid now. Yet, my father still doesn't look at me. Instead he turns, leaving me no other option but to follow him.

The journey to Kyoto and the grand palace of the Shogun is not a quick one. With our only form of transportation being horses, the journey will take 3 days at the fastest. I aim to prolong the journey as long as I can, taking many stops, and forcing my father to stop and enjoy the beauty that is Japan with me. I beg him to allow us to stop in Nara, but he tells me it is to far out of the way. Instead he allows us to take a route past Mount Fuji. Never in my life have I seen something so beautiful. Standing at the base of the mountain I can feel the anxiety rush from my body. Instead a power and a freedom fill me. I refuse to allow this feeling to leave. I cling to this new strength found in the base of a mountain surrounded by fresh green grass and the small of autumn air. I vow that I will let no man take this feeling from me, I vow that I will use my soon to be position as the Shoguns wife to gain control and power. Never again will I let a man dictate my life choices for me.

Upon arriving to Kyoto I feel like a new woman. I feel as though I have aged a thousand years, when in reality I am still just a young girl at 16. While I loathe the men who have forced me to grow up so fast, I also embrace leaving childish things behind. I am a woman now, and with being a woman comes power. The first person to greet me upon my arrival is my great aunt. She takes me in her arms and we embrace for a long period of time. Formality is lost to us when emotion takes over. She whispers into my ear, "Could this be the same Tomiko I held as a baby? How much stronger you have gotten. I can not be any happier that it is you who is marrying my son." We pull away from each other and I smile at her. I bow low to show my respect, and she bows in response. "Come, my son waits."

We walk to an inner sanctuary within the palace. Already I'm overwhelmed by the amount of art lining the walls, the books of calligraphy and poetry. I can appreciate its beauty, but I have no time for it. It is trivial and I've always believed so, there's so much more to focus on. It's a waste of time. I continue to walk until we get to the inner courtyard. I see Yoshimasa. Despite having seen him many times before, this time is different. He has aged into an incredibly handsome man. His heavy layers of robes hide his figure, but my imagination plays as to the body that is under the robe. I continue to stare but he does not turn to me yet. Instead he stands with a woman at least twice his age. He whispers in her ear and a smile is lighting her face. My look of disgust and envy must be clear to all those around me, and they begin to shuffle nervously. They must be used to this display of affection between the two. My great-aunt mirrors my disgust and turns to me. "I'm sorry you had to see this. That's his wet-nurse from when he was just a baby, Imamairi. I assure you, he will be bored with her very soon. Its just a phase, you know how men can be." I nod solemnly, but my heart aches. I know there can never be love between me and this man who eats women and then throws them up.

Our wedding is traditional and uneventful. Yoshimasa and his mother have decided to have a Shinto wedding in order to best conform to the religions of the time, though neither are particularly moved or involved in the religion (I am not either). They paint me head to toe in white, to show my virginal status. We and the other guests are lead by the Shinto leader before a shrine, where we are then blessed and purified by the Shinto Priest. I force myself to look into Yoshimasa's eyes, but they remind of a pigs, dead and lifeless, void of emotion. He looks at me hungry. I can sense him already forgetting this older woman, he is a shark smelling blood and coming in for the attack. I try my best to remain as calm and emotionless as him through the rest of the ceremony. Isn't this supposed to be the most exciting day of my life? Why is instead a memory I just wish to have over with as fast as possible, and then forgotten. A Shinto maiden performs a dance and I lose myself in the slow, beautiful moments. Yoshimasa and I drink 3 times from the rice wine, and he reads his vows. His voice is monotone and lifeless as his eyes. After our offering we exchange rings, and finally the event is over.

Our wedding night is as traumatic as the wedding and I desire to push it away it the deepest parts of my memory where it cannot resurface to traumatize me again.

This is my life for the next 4 years. Yoshimasa uses me when he needs me, but forgets about me the instant he leaves. The only way to pass the time is with my greataunt. We talk for hours on end about politics, we discuss the situation in the country, and we often discuss Yoshimasa. She wishes she had a son who was meant to be a leader, whose passion was war and control. Instead she has a son who loves only art and meaningless things like no-drama or calligraphy. We relish in the thought of Yoshimasa being a man either of us could be proud of. We sometimes speak of what we would do if we were shogun. These are only wishful ideas at this point, and we in no way believe that they could ever happen. Imamairi becomes a topic of conversation often as well. As predicted, Yoshimasa has lost interest in her, but this did not cause her to give up. Instead she offers to Yoshimasa her niece. In typical Yoshimasa fashion, he beds her and she birthes

him a daughter. This angers Yoshimasa as he has not produced a son and an heir to the throne. He takes this anger out on me; I'm his wife, why can I not give him a son? My great-aunt Shigeko assures me that I will have a son soon; she believes the gods are just waiting until the right time.

The right time comes in the year of 1459. I discover I am pregnant early in the year, and everyone is overjoyed. Yoshimasa begins to fret over me; he believes too that this will be the heir he finally desires. Late in the year the child comes. I remember the pain vividly, but when I hold my baby in my arms I begin to cry. How perfect he was with his tiny brown eyes, his finger nails smaller than a grain of rice, his head covered in a light down of black. I hold him and still hold him as his breaths begin to fail. Imamairi pulls him into her arms, "He needs to feed," she claims, but I saw the menace in her eyes. I scream at her to give him back, my perfect child, but she leaves the room. I try to follow but I am forced back into bed by my great-aunt. "You need your rest," she chides, "I will follow her." I sink back into my pillows and allow sleep to come to me.

When I wake up again the room is empty except for Shigeko, my great-aunt, who sits by me. "Where is my baby?" I ask. She shakes her head, "Imamairi has killed her." I scream and the tears flood my face. Despite having birthed just hours previously, I have never felt a pain this intense in my life. "Where is she?" I scream. "I want her killed." Shigeko nods. "It'll be done." She touches me before she leaves the room. I continue screaming and wailing. My husband never comes to me.

Shigeko arranges for Imamairi to be banished, convincing Yoshimasa that she cursed his son and she was the cause for his death. It is four days after she is banished that I learn she has committed seppuku on the way to Lake Biwa. I believe this is a death too honorable for her. Imamairi and my dead son fill my thoughts constantly, but slowly as time continues passing, these thoughts of anger begin to turn into nightmares. I dream of Imamairi coming to me in the night and smothering me with my pillow. I dream that when I awake I find her with my husband. They both laugh at me, approaching slowly with swords that they cut my flesh with. Shigeko dreams of similar things, and we both know this is Imamairi's revenge. My recovery from childbirth is long and prolonged, preventing my husband and I from trying to conceive again. Shigeko falls seriously ill. We call these both results of the 'Imamairi Curse'. The curse would remain with me for most of my life.

Again years past, but this time not so uneventfully. Yoshimasa begins to grow restless; he is not cut out for ruling. He desires to stay in his garden all day, eat all the food he loves, and sleep with his concubines. He is searching for a way out of ruling. He finds it in his younger brother, who had left the shogunate to become a monk. He calls on him, begging him to come and be shogun as he has no heir. His brother is hesitant, claiming that the instant Yoshimasa and I have a son, he will gain the power. Then he will not only no longer be a monk, but also not the shogun. Yoshimasa assures him with his honor, even if he has a son the shogunate will not be given to him but remain to his brother. Yoshimi, his younger brother finally agrees. When Yoshimasa tells me of this I grow angry. How could I be married to someone so cowardly and naïve? I slap him and he returns with a punch. "You

stupid woman,” he screams, “you know nothing of ruling a country.” This begins to make me laugh, because for years now I have been the one instructing him in what to do. I have been the one making the decisions for the whole country. I glare at him, “If I have a son,” I snarl, “He will be the shogun and I will rule beside him, and you can sit in your garden all day.” He hits me again but I remain upright.

Its just months later that I have a son. I look to Yoshimasa and repeat my promise, “My son will be the shogun.” Yoshimi has already begun his preparation to be ruler. When the news reaches him he becomes anxious, and begins to speed up plans for ensuring his shogun position. It is nearing February of 1467, and this sudden power play begins to force people to take sides. Rumors of war begin stirring. The Hosokawa family in the East and the Yamana family in the west beginning to side with either Yoshimi or with my son. Hosokawa is with Yoshimi, and Yamana with my son. It is February 22, the first month in the second year of Bunsho, when the war officially begins. They call it the Onin War and it is to last 10 years. Just outside of the imperial palace at the Kami Goryo Shrine in Northern Kyoto a fight breaks out between Masanage and Yoshinari.

This marks a grave era in our Kyoto history. It is also around this time that the blame on me begins stirring. People blame me for having a son and demanding that he be shogun. People blame me for being the one who ‘pulled Yoshimasa’s strings’. People claim I am just money hungry, that I control the whole treasury. There is even a rumor that I bought up the whole rice supply and sold it to both parties at an inflated price, just to make fast money.

Despite these 10 years being a time of constant war, Yoshimasa still makes time to continue his festivals, where he can enjoy art and his favorite food. He hosts the spring festival on April 6. The Yamana family attends, while the Hosokawa families do not. This increases distrust in the Hosokawa family. The festival is absolutely stunning, however, for spring in Japan is a beauty to behold. The guests arrive outside where we host in the garden outback. A river runs through mossy land, and we have a large sand pit where stands a tall tower, maintained by the monks of the Shinto religion. There is no reason for Hosokawa to not attend, for during this period of time only beauty is appreciated, and thoughts of evil and war are set aside. While I remain a strong supporter of Yamana at all times, my husband finds it harder to find his allegiance. A battle rages on June 27 1467 between Masanage and Hosokawa Katsumoto. Masanage attacks first, despite them having no good reason to enter the war, and no real allegiance to either side. It does bring me small hope though that perhaps other groups will spring up and help fight Hosokawa. Perhaps these added groups will bring the strength needed to ensure that my son gains power and I maintain my control. Eventually Yamana comes in to fight as well. They end up winning the battle, much to my joy. To add to controversy, however, my husband allows Katsumoto to fly the shogunal banner during this battle.

At this point I am angered with my husband, and seek support from my brother Katsumitsu. I ask him to help convince Yoshimasa that the rightful heir to the throne is his son. The advantage of fighting is still constantly shifting to Hosokawa, however. My husband being the coward he is sides with whichever

army is in control. He listens to none of my counsel at the time, and will not even visit our son. At this time my son falls blind in one eye, just another effect of the Imamairi curse. It is a slow moving blindness, but my son never finds it within himself to complain. I only notice when his teacher comes to me and says his calligraphy is progressively getting worse. I catch my son Yoshishisa playing outside one day and demand he tells me what is ailing him. "Yoshihisa," I say, "Your teacher tells me your studies are getting worse. He fears it is your eyesight. Is something wrong Yoshihisa?" He shrugs and this angers me, I did not raise my son to be some coward who is incapable of words and expressing his thoughts. "Answer my Yoshihisa, do not act like your father and ignore me." This brings him to answer, because he loves me more than he will ever love his father. He desires to never treat me in the same way his father does. "It's my left eye," he whispers, "I didn't want to tell you because I was afraid it would show my weakness." I scoff and bring him into my arms. "Oh Yoshihisa, this is not your weakness. This is your father's weakness. Because of his stupidity he brought a curse on this family in the form of one of his many lovers. I had her banished, and now her curse follows use around after her seppuku." Yoshihisa watches my face with little expression. "This is father's fault?" he questions. "Most things are," I reply. "But my son, as usual, I will be the one to fix his problems." And so I set out to finally do something about the curse, and I look to absolve it in the only way I know. I build a Shinto shrine to Imamairi in Kyoto where she is to be the chief figure of worship. The temple is truly grand in its splendor, and I hope to the gods that this is the solution to the Imamairi curse. In this way I begin to feel absolved of the curse.

A turning point in the Onin war finally comes when Yoshimasa's brother, proving that cowardice runs in the Ashikaga line, flees to refuge with his wife. He was beginning to fear that Yoshimasa would start listening to me and side with the Yamana family. Unfortunately for him, it is actually his decision to flee that causes Yoshimasa to side with Yamana. At last my husband finds reason. When he learns of the news I am with him. He begins to yell, about the cowardice of his brother, and the hopelessness of the shogunate in general. I smile mockingly, because I know that the reason for the destruction of the shogunate (if it is too happen) is all because of him. If he wasn't some coward who could not rule properly, we would still have stability. We would also have no war. If he had just accepted the position he was born into, as I did, and didn't search for some way out all of this fighting could have been avoided. All this being said, however, I hope this decision by Yoshimasa will bring some peace to the fighting. It is too good to be true as a major battle is still to be fought in the 10th month of 1467 for the possession of Shokoku-ji, a zen temple very important to my husband's family. Yamana sets fire to these temples, and it causes great worry. When I hear of the fire I grab my son and flee with the other women to the dinner party my husband is hosting. When we enter they look entirely unaffected. "Yoshimasa!" I cry, "The city is burning and you sit here eating!" He puts down his food and looks at me with indifference. "If the empire must collapse, oh well, let it collapse." With this the women and me flee, leaving Yoshimasa and his guests to their own devices. Though no one is harmed,

once again my husbands own stubbornness and entitlement has left others vulnerable.

It is only in the 11th month of 1477 that the fighting finally ends. No victor is crowned, and rather the western army just grows tired of fighting. In my opinion, it is a disappointing ending. Yamana simply leaves the fighting, and no one seeks to pursue them in order to finish it with more honors. The outcome, despite Yamana being the ones to give up, still remains in my favor. My son gains the shogun position, and I continue to exert my power through him. Yoshimasa finally is relieved of his shogun duties, and chooses to build himself a temple. It is similar to his ancestors Kinkakuji, but instead he calls it Ginkakuji. He intends to cover it in silver as the name implies, but it never happens. It is a truly beautiful temple, a testimony to his love of the arts and his appreciation of beautiful things. He moves into the temple and I no longer have to see him. He is left to his art, and I am left to ruling. This is the way that it was always meant to be. My husband sitting back, doing nothing. Me, the woman behind everything, leading from the shadows under the disguise of my son. I feel I can at last live out the promise I made to myself at the base of Mount Fuji. At last I can be the powerful leader that Japan needs and that Japan deserves.

And so I am blamed for the start of the Onin War. They say I forced my husband to do many things. But the only credit me for the bad I did through him, and never the good. If only people could see it from my point of view.



Justine Keefer is a 2nd year student at the University of Calgary. Growing up as the daughter of missionary workers different cultures played an important part in her life. She is currently studying to enter Social Work, mainly taking courses of interest within different cultures and languages.

If the Bird Will Not Sing, Kill It: Notes of a Warlord

Mitchell Kraan

This series of journal notes has been translated into English and is accompanied by notes to help the reader understand the context of the journal.

1553, February 25

One of my retainers, Hirate Masahide, has killed himself. And for what reason? That I am “The Lord of Fools. They think me odd, but so what if I grow my hair long? So what if I wear a leopard patterned jacket with only one sleeve? The other sleeve only gets in the way of my archery, they’re the weird ones for not seeing the practicality of this. And even if I am weird, who would not be after being raised virtually alone? Who would not when one’s first battle was at age 7, and whose own relatives attempted to kill him for inheritance? So I am strange, let me be strange. Little do they know that this is exactly what I want them to think. Why else would I throw my father’s ashes with such abandon? My horse racing is actually archery practice, and my swimming is actually to practice fighting. So long as they think I am the strange one, they will continue to underestimate me, leaving their backs open to me. Japan will be mine, for although the others may not realize it, Japan is in chaos and needs strong rule.

1160, June 13

Despite the overwhelming odds, Imagawa has fallen before me. Still, the victory is not due to my power alone. After all, he was the one who chose to party in a ravine. Now who is the Lord of Fools? Yet despite his poor decision making, he proved to be a far more formidable warrior. He even had the courtesy to put herbs in his helmet to mask the stench of death. Nevertheless, the events after the battle are the ones that pique my curiosity. An oni approached me, I think he called himself Mephistopheles. Strange name for an oni. He then offered me the power to seek the order I so desire. He only asked for one thing: my soul, whatever that is. I asked him what it was, but he only told me that I would know when the time is right. In any case, it is obvious there is only one way to attain peace: by force. The daimyo are clearly more interested in their own affairs than the greater good, no amount of persuasion will change that. I will start by moving on Kyoto to secure the Emperor. From there, conquest should not be too difficult. I have made a pact with Matsudaira Motoyasu in order to ensure my rearguard remains safe. Despite his family background, I sense in him the same desire for order across the land.

1568, March 28

The road has been long and hard, but victory is within my grasp. With the fall of Mizukuri Castle, Kyoto is now mine. The Emperor himself has even greeted me personally. With this, I now have direct access to the twin powers of the Emperor and Shogun. By influencing them both, I can now exert my will across the country and bring order.

1571, September 20

The Buddhists at Enrajuji can be tolerated no longer. They command too much influence to be left to their own devices. They claim to be on a mission of peace, yet they clearly desire power. Why else would they train themselves to fight? They claim to eschew sex and drink, yet they partake frequently. They are hypocrites of the highest order. Moreover, they attempted to influence the courts to send the big noses back to their ships. Why? Because their Christianity challenges their power and beliefs. I cannot allow this to happen. Their weaponry may allow me to achieve the order I seek (Their armour particularly intrigues me, I may have to acquire my own set). In any case, there shall be no mercy towards the Buddhists. If they seek to hide behind their “peaceful” beliefs, then I shall show them the face of a true warrior. I will send them on a river of their own blood to meet Izanami.

1575, June 29

Nagashino is ours and Takeda Katsuyori is on the back-foot. He thought he could make a name for himself by taking out Matsudaira Motoyasu. How cute. As Matsudaira is my ally, of course I could not allow this to happen. Although gifted with excellent cavalry, the battlefield was rife with obstacles, making them prime targets for my gunners. Firing in volleys, the gunners broke the momentum of the cavalry, and eventually crushed them. As I thought, western technology may very well be the key to unification. Despite this success, it may not have happened if the powder had gotten wet in that heavy storm. In any case, with Takeda’s forces crippled, the East is now secure, and with Matsudaira controlling the South, all that remains is the West.

1579, December 25

My glorious new castle (and symbol of my power) at Azuchi has been completed. As the largest building in Japan, surrounded by the Biwa River and with the walls higher than any castle in Japan, Azuchi Castle will last well beyond my death. As befitting my status, it is also situated such that I can observe the major land and water highways. Given this, I believe it would be prudent to construct a town here. I will attract the merchants with generous conditions to allow them to sell their goods and obtain capital. Perhaps with this, I can further furnish my already decadent castle with even more fabulous sliding screens. Perhaps I can even turn it into the next Golden Pavilion, except that Azuchi will actually be useful.

1582, June 9

I have sent HashibaHideyoshi to pacify the West. Loyal since the very beginning, I have raised him from lowly sandal bearer to one of my top generals, much to the ire of my highest retainers. He has given me no reason to doubt my decision. I heard he even diverted a nearby river onto Takamatsu Castle. As expected of a monkey. With such cunning, I have no doubt that Western Japan shall fall under my thumb. Should I fall, his ruthless nature will ensure that my work will not go unfinished.

1582, June 11

AkechiMitsuhide rides to the west to aid HashibaHideyoshi against the Mori. Although Akechi has been a competent administrator, I do not wish to have him by my side. I see treachery in his heart. It is after all partly my fault that his mother is dead. I had no choice. I cannot trust that HatanoHideharu would not rise against me if I promised him safe treatment, he had to die. Akechi probably was not too pleased that I burned down the Enryakuji Buddhists either. Although a Buddhist, he is too useful to have killed. If I should happen to see him, maybe I won't insult him (not likely). I think I'll make a short stop by Hannouji and take a break in the meantime. After all, even warlords need breaks.

Death Poem

日本
 良い國作ろう
 為すべき事為したが
 躓いじゃった
 何で

Japan

Let's make a nice country
 Although I did what had to be done
 I have failed
 Why



My name is Mitch Kraan, and my major is East Asian Language Studies. In other words, I study Japanese and Chinese. Although both are difficult languages, every time I encounter difficulty, I find solace in that I can do what I could not several years ago, because after all, “the journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step”. Anyhow, I digress. When it came time to write this story, I thought that this would be quite a daunting task, for I have not had much experience writing fiction. Then, when I was reading Notes from Underground, an idea hit me: I'll do it as a series of journal entries. After all, every man has his story, even one as ruthless as Oda Nobunaga. Given the status of Japan at this time, one could easily see him taking any measure necessary in order to bring peace (and obtain power). In any case, please enjoy these notes from the warlord.

The Tale of Lady Suruga

Selina Miao

Edo was covered in white snow and all the living creatures patiently waited for Spring to come. It was difficult to travel at this time, but in the February of 1586, the official route between Osaka and Edo Castle was rather crowded and busy. Today was the wedding day of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the bride, Asahi-no-Kata, was the half-sister of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Two of the most powerful families of Japan, the Toyotomi and Tokugawa had agreed to keep the peace by this political marriage.

At Edo Castle, there were already rumours about Asahi-no-Kata, their head mistress to be. According to a samurai who had once accompanied Tokugawa Ieyasu to Osaka Castle once, Asahi-no-Kata had the same “monkey face” as her brother Hideyoshi, and she often punished her maids because she was jealous of their youth and beauty. Ieyasu’s concubines started whispering about the arrangement between their lord and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Some said that Asahi-no-Kata was a spy, and others were pleased that, even if she delivered a boy, her son could never become the heir of the Tokugawa family. The concubines giggled about how Ieyasu would have to touch her on their wedding night.

While the people of Edo Castle prepared for Asahi-no-Kata’s arrival, Ieyasu sat in his official meeting room, waiting for his bride. Seated in the centre, surrounded by his sons and samurais, Ieyasu calmly spoke: “I will be marrying Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s sister today. From this time on, the people of Edo Castle shall refer to my new wife as Lady Suruga and everyone will respect her the same as they respect me, your Lord.” Then, he discharged everyone, asking his younger sons to return to their mothers and patiently wait the arrival of the Toyotomis. After his sons and samurais had left, the meeting room was in silence. Sitting by himself, Ieyasu started thinking about his wedding, his new wife, and unavoidably, his former best friend and current enemy, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Although he had already become the second most powerful man in Japan, he was still being forced to take Hideyoshi’s sister as his official wife. Based on his sources, it seemed he was not the only one being forced into this marriage. Asahi-no-Kata, his bride, was also being forced by her brother to divorce her ex-husband Soeda Yoshinari and marry him. Although she was unkind and not very pretty, Ieyasu still felt some sympathy for this woman after he heard the story of her ex-husband, Soeda Yoshinari, who refused Hideyoshi’s compensation and became a monk in Kyoto. Nonetheless, Ieyasu believed that Hideyoshi engineered this arranged marriage to make himself miserable as some sort of revenge.

At noon, along with Hideyoshi’s ten samurais, Asahi-no-Kata and her brother’s representative arrived at Edo Castle. Asahi-no-Kata wore a red uchikake kimono with cranes on it, and her silky, black hair naturally fell over her back like a waterfall. Although she was expressionless and her eyes looked down at the floor,

no one could deny her beauty. Tokugawa Ieyasu started looking forward to his arranged marriage. Tokugawa Nobuyasu, the eldest son of Ieyasu who stood beside his father, even glimpsed him smile. Many years after, Ieyasu still remembered the impression he had of his wife when they first met on their wedding day. The sky became dark after the wedding ceremony. On the way to see his new wife, the chill wind cooled down the fire inside Ieyasu's heart. Then, a suspicion raised. Ieyasu suddenly realized that his bride did not look like Toyotomi Hideyoshi at all. "Asahi-no-Kata is the halfsister of Hideyoshi, so they still must share a bloodline and thus must look alike in someway," Ieyasu said to himself. "Or this is a conspiracy of Hideyoshi, he did not send his sister to Edo but a spy."

Ieyasu did not see his new wife on their wedding night; he watched her for days and questions came to his mind: "if she were a spy, how come she and her maids seem callous?" Ieyasu told his spies in Osaka Castle to gather more information about Asahi-no-Kata. Months later, he received a ukiyo-e of a banquet hosted by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, where all the important members of the Toyotomi family were in attendance. The garden was decorated with paper red lanterns and screens with Chinese paintings, and all the women were dressed in colourful kimonos made of silk. The mother was sitting beside Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu could tell it was her because she had stayed with the Tokugawa family for years as a hostage. Kneeling beside her was Asahi-no-Kata and a good-looking samurai, who must have been Asahi-no-Kata's exhusband. Still, he was uncertain.

Eager to find out the truth, Ieyasu had finally decided to see his wife months after their wedding day. Standing outside Asahi-no-Kata's chamber, he asked his servant to announce his presence. A few seconds later, the door slowly opened. One of the maids was kneeling beside the door. As he entered the room, Asahi-no-Kata also came out to greet him. Unlike the first time Ieyasu saw her, she wore a black kimono today but was still expressionless. Glancing around the room, he saw a Buddhist sutra which lay on her table. "She is still thinking of her ex-husband," Ieyasu thought, "no wonder she was unaffected by the fact I haven't visited her once." But still, he asked Asahi-no-Kata to sit beside him and discharged all their servants and maids. "My lady," politely spoke by Ieyasu, "I must apologize for not visiting you since our wedding. As you know, Edo Castle is newly built, and I have been trapped with all kinds of things." He was expecting Asahi-no-Kata to speak. But after he waited few minutes, his wife remained silent. It seemed she was not listening to him but staring at the Sutra. With anger inside his heart, Ieyasu pretended to be patient and continued to speak: "I hope you will enjoy your life here in Edo, your mother and brother would be glad to hear that you're happy." Still no response, but Ieyasu was pleased as he glimpsed his wife frown at the mention of Hideyoshi.

He decided to talk a bit more about Hideyoshi to find out her reactions. "We should all be thankful to your brother Hideyoshi who arranged this marriage." As Ieyasu expected, he successfully captured Asahi-no-Kata's attention this time. She was no longer staring at the Sutra. Then, Ieyasu continued: "I remember once when Hideyoshi and I were together at Oda Nobunaga's castle to discuss what each of us would do about a songbird in a cage that would not sing. Nobunaga said, ' I'll

make it sing ,’ your brother Hideyoshi on the other hand said, ‘I’ll kill it if it doesn’t.’ Quite cruel, don’t you think?” He asked her. Without waiting for Asahi-no-Kata to open her mouth, Ieyasu kept going, “ I said that I would wait until it does sing. But Hideyoshi laughed at me, he told me that some songbirds die before they sing.” Then, he stood up and walked up behind Asahi-no-Kata, and suddenly lowered his head and whispered in her ear, “I’ll wait until you forget your ex-husband and start to love me. You’re Lady Suruga now, Tokugawa Ieyasu’s wife.” After talking with his wife, Ieyasu ascertained the woman he married was indeed Hideyoshi’s half-sister. Although she did not love him nor talked to him once, Ieyasu had confidence that Asahi-no-Kata would eventually accept him as her husband. “I’m a lord and the head of the Tokugawa family, after all, ten times better than her ex-husband who was just a samurai who served for Toyotomi family, now monk.” Ieyasu thought. Since that day, the people of Edo Castle noticed that their head mistress, Lady Suruga, often received gifts from their Lord. Ieyasu sent her his best teas, silks and sometimes even a poem that was written on a fan with the beautiful flower on it. Although their lord only visited Lady Suruga during the daytime and never stayed overnight in her chamber, Ieyasu’s concubines were still jealous of Asahi-no-Kata. To protect Asahi-no-Kata from his concubines, Ieyasu ordered that no one in Edo Castle could approach his wife without his permission. Everyone in Edo Castle knows that their Lord Ieyasu deeply loved Lady Suruga. He even agreed to let Asahi-no-Kata pay a visit to Osaka Castle to see her mother, but Ieyasu did not realize that this decision would become his everlasting regret.

Ten years later, Ieyasu walked through the burnt ruins of Osaka Castle. The large beams that had held up the ceiling sill quietly burned. All the important members of the Toyotomi family had perished in this war including his granddaughter who chose to die with her husband. With the Toyotomi family overthrown, he was now the most powerful man in Japan. Tokugawa Nobuyasu, still upset about his daughter’s death, threw one of the captured vassals to his knees. Ieyasu stopped his eldest son. It was this vassal who informed Ieyasu that Asahi-no-Kata had been buried ten years ago in a temple nearby Kyoto. He told Ieyasu that, she rested alongside Soeda Yoshinari, who had committed suicide upon learning Asahi-no-Kata’s death.

In the following month, Ieyasu decided to pay a visit to Kyoto. When he arrived, fresh snow had fallen and covered the tomb of Asahi-no-Kata. A dark brown songbird landed on her tomb, its talons leaving maple-leaf prints in the snow. Ieyasu recalled the moment when he told Asahi-no-Kata about the songbirds. But now, standing alone, he said: “your brother was right, some songbirds die before they sing.”



Selina Miao is a fourth year International Relations and East Asian Studies student at the University of Calgary. Born and raised in China, she is passion about Chinese history and other East Asia civilizations especially Japan. She has enjoyed studying Japanese language and culture at the Univeristy, and her favorite book is *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu.

47 Ronin of Ako

Fictional diary of an anonymous ronin

Sunyoung Ahn

April 1701

A tale exemplifying what it means to be a true samurai that follows the Bushido is about to unfold. It does not matter my name, nor my family history. My only wish is to present the truth to those who discover my diary after my death from avenging my late daimyo, Lord Asano Naganori of the Ako domain. This shall be presented as evidence of our Samurai Way, unquestionable and unshakeable until we meet our deaths. I wish to preserve my anonymity in the possible case that one of Kira Yoshinaka's followers unfold our plans before they are executed. Lately, I can sense their unease and the silent footsteps trace after my every move.

My late daimyo, Lord Asano Naganori was made a fool by Kira Yoshinaka, a powerful shogun official. My Lord responded with self-control, until his patience ran thin and was pushed to attack Kira. Although the wound was superficial and did not cause death, drawing your wakizashi inside Edo Castle and attacking a shogun official is considered a grave offence. Thus, Lord Asano was sentenced to commit seppuku. All 371 of the samurai that were under Lord Asano have now become ronin. Although I must not digress, I cannot withhold my personal opinion on this matter. To shame my lord by calling him a "country boor with no manners," ... Kira Yoshinaka truly deserves the fate of death. To be so chained to money and bribery... Kira is a shame to all people of Japan. Unfortunately, what is past is past, and no one can change the effects of time, not my lord nor us ronin.

Our Bushido tells us to take revenge upon those who attack our master. In the precise moment, we will do so under the direction of Ōishi Kuranosuke, our leader and the late Lord Asano's principal counselor.

2 May 1701

As we had expected, Kira is highly suspicious of our actions, and has taken security measures to guard himself and his castle. We cannot proceed with our plans if he is so securely guarded. Our leader, Ōishi Kuranosuke has come up with a brilliant plan in which will disguise our actions and take Kira off his guard. Only time can help us now.

According to Ōishi, we must disperse and become faceless. Only 47 of us are willing to follow the Bushido and avenge our Lord, but it will be enough to take Kira down. It is not permitted by the Shogun to get revenge, but we must for it is our Way. We will become normal people of Japan, and put on an act in which we

renounce our Ways of the samurai. But in our hearts, we will never have renounced our Ways, even in the face of death!

3 September 1701

We have all assimilated into normal society. I, for one, have assumed a role of a simple farmer at my relative's farm near our target location, Edo. I feel like a masked actor in a Noh drama. It is difficult to put on a such a show when you can feel eyes all around you, peering at your every movement and neighbours whispering behind your turned back. People are starting to question our Way, and if we are true samurai. Kira is still suspicious of the possibility of revenge, and we must dispel that fear. Many of my comrades have become merchants and monks to pretend that we have all renounced our Way. Now, only time will show how Kira's defenses will tumble down.

We do not meet frequently due to our enemy's suspicions and shadowing eyes, but we met once in Edo to discuss our plans in further detail. Many of us are slowly starting to transport weapons and armours into Edo in order to prepare for the attack. One of my comrades have even married Kira's house builder's daughter just so that he may be able to view the blueprints of the mansion. I must also dedicate my life to my Lord, as all my comrades are showing.

22 January 1702

There are whisperings of stories around me that I catch from villagers and neighbors. These stories revolve around my Lord, and his behaviour before death. I cannot prove these rumors to be false or correct. I have never personally known my Lord, but only heard of his orders and tales from the servants of his home. The gossipers say that he was neither skilled in military or literary aspects. They say that it was expected that he could not control himself in such situations, and that this irrational, selfish behavior ran within in the family. Others murmur tales of his sexual profligacy and hotheadedness. Previous to his death, I did overhear two servants close to Lord Asano speak of his inability to control himself around women, but at the time I did not think too much of it. Our leader, Oishi has told us stories of his restraint and patience, but perhaps he had exaggerated these tales to boost our will to avenge Lord Asano. Who knows the real story...?

However, it is true that Lord Asano's uncle also showed this type of disgraceful behavior. Naito Kadakatsu, Lord Asano's uncle, was relieved of his life when he killed another daimyo on temple grounds during the funeral rites of the 4th Shogun. He also shouted out that this assault was revenge for an insult. It really does seem that hot temper runs in the family. However, regardless of my personal liking or feelings for Lord Asano, I must remain true to my warrior code. To leave the death of my lord unavenged is disgraceful to me as a man following the Way of the samurai.

14 June 1702

I believe people are beginning to truly believe our acts. I am even starting to become better at work, and my relatives do not find me useless anymore! My wife

and children are becoming used to this type of lifestyle and are enjoying the abundant nature that comes with living on a farm. I still practice my samurai skills by moonlight when everyone is asleep. I cannot let my sword become weak and rust, and this also goes for my movements. Although I practice less often than when I was employed under Lord Asano, I can feel my body becoming stronger from all the manual labor I must perform every day. Even though I put on this act every day, inside myself is the heart of a samurai. I have not made contact with our leader for quite a while now. I hope everyone is doing their part realistically and fooling everyone around them. We must not show an ounce of our true plans to Japan. Even our families must be fooled by our acting. My wife, Kaneko, does not know of my true intentions. Although my heart bears a heavy feeling of guilt, I cannot bear the even bigger shame of living as a ronin that has not avenged his master.

1 December 1702

I have finally heard something from our leader and rumors have also reached my ears. He is doing well, but I cannot tell whether the rumors of his lifestyle can be considered as “doing well” or “acting well”. They say that Ōishi has lost all his concerns for his future. He has left his wife and children for the life of excess drinking and courtesans. They say that he has lost all hope for his self respect and honor. This seems to be true judging from the rumors I have heard from my neighbors. He truly is succeeding in fooling everyone by putting on such a wild and daring act! I have also heard many tales of him starting drunken brawls with everyone who dares to anger him even by the slightest bit.

The other night, our leader Ōishi came by my humble residence to share of some news and stories from Edo. He reassured me that our plans were still in place, and that the time for us to strike was very soon. He is estimating it will be within a few weeks. Ōishi has really divorced his wife and left his children with the exception of his eldest son Chikara, who will be leading one of our forces. He told me of one memorable drunken night on the streets. A samurai from Satsuma came across his drunken form and spit on his face, calling him no real samurai. To be so dedicated to his late Lord... It is truly inspiring.

5 December 1702

The day that we are all taking an action against Kira is coming soon. We all met secretly to finalize the plans and timing. We will all be alerted secretly the day before the attack. All of our weaponry and armor are successfully hidden away and we have everything we need. Kira is completely unsuspecting of our actions. I do not sense any spies anymore, and there are rumors going around that Kira is rebuking us ronin for not being true samurai. He shall finally understand our true intent.

I haven't told my wife Kaneko of anything. I am conflicted in whether I should tell her the truth, or hide it until the very end as Ōishi did. I am worried that perhaps my actions will create problems for my wife and children. I do not want my family to be punished for my own actions. Perhaps I will tell her before I leave

for the attack, and tell her to pack her belongings to leave for her relative's place further away from Edo. It will be safer for her. I hope that she does not resent my Way and honor. I hope my children grow up respecting and understanding their father's actions. I know that I will be punished for following the Bushido and avenging my Lord's death. There is a higher possibility of my death than freedom, but I am still willing to meet my death for that is my Way.

13 December 1702

This is the last day I will write in this diary. We plan to attack Kira's mansion tomorrow. Our plans are all set and the messenger came by today to inform me. Kira is completely off his guard now and assumes that we have all forgotten our code of honor. We will all gather and don the armor and weaponry that my comrades have been guarding and collecting for all this time. We will split into two teams as Ōishi has told me before – one team entering the rear of the compound, and one forcing their way into the front. Chikara will be leading one of these teams and he is only 16. It's honorable and at the same time unfortunate that he has to meet the same fate as us older men who are twice his age.

My only wish now is that we succeed in this mission, and that my family remain safe. Although my position as the head of the family will disappear, my eldest son will be strong enough to support his mother and sisters. I trust that my family can still remain strong without their father.

There is no turning back now. I must leave in a few hours to journey to Edo. This is our story of the 47 Ako ronin. We will serve our code of honor until death, regardless of the time that has progressed. In our hearts until the very end of days is only our Way!



Sunyoung Ahn is currently an undergraduate student at the University of Calgary working towards a Psychology degree. Sunyoung loves learning new languages and about different cultures. After visiting Japan in 2010, Sunyoung has maintained a keen interest in modern and historical Japanese culture, with her main interest being in Japanese history. Sunyoung hopes to visit Japan again in the future.

Ii Naosuke's Last Thoughts

Brittany Rook

It was a very different night. The sky was dark, almost too dark; its all-encompassing canopy swallowed all light. No stars dared show tonight. The moon pierced the night with its heavy presence, like an ever-watchful eye. Ii spared the full moon a quick glance, his stomach twisting. When he was a child he would often look up at the sky and pretend the moon was a silent protector. It almost seemed to have a foreboding presence now. He banished the thought away with a shake of the head and looked away.

Living at the monastery as a child had been tough, even though he would never admit that out loud. He had missed his parents, and through the years, he slowly lost each of his brothers, either to adoption or death. Ii had learned to harden himself, to never trust anyone. Except the moon. He would look up at the sky at night and have private conversations with the friendly glowing orb in the sky. It was his only friend and his protector. It was always there for him, every night; constantly. He began to harden himself from humans; they only betrayed each other and caused pain. He partially attributed his success to this mindset; during this time and age, friends could become enemies within seconds. The only constant one could count on in this world is that people caused pain.

The man beside Ii coughed. Ii couldn't remember his name. Truth be told, he only truly cared about men of equal standing and power. Other names were useless to him. This samurai was young and handsome, and Ii knew he was talented. He was sure that if one of his enemies made an attempt on his life, this young samurai would react accordingly. That was his job after all.

Ii had been warned numerous times. His friends, other political advisors, people below him, all of them had warned him of the thin ice he was now treading on. His life was in danger, they insisted. He should retire from office while he was still breathing! Ii knew he was pushing boundaries and stepping on toes, but it was all in the best interests of the nation. Surely his enemies would take this into account. Additionally, he had taken care of all of them. He had placated their worries with a firm shake of the head and a quick statement along the lines of him not quitting while Japan's future was in danger.

Ii had found it difficult to keep his head held high after the Harris treaty, but he still preserved that it was in Japan's best interests. He had tried to seek the emperor's advice, but the ridiculous daimyo of the Hitotsubashi faction prevented that by withholding their approval. The American envoy, Townsend Harris, only pushed harder, and that had made Ii uneasy. After what had happened with Commodore Perry, he wouldn't push it past the Americans to resort to military power to achieve their goals. Ii had made a decision while backed into a corner,

and while he may have felt unhappy about the consequences of it afterwards, there really had been nothing he could have done.

Additionally, he was pressured into further negotiations of similar unequal treaties with foreigners, including the Dutch, Russians, British and the French. His enemies seethed and foamed at the mouth while visions of his political demise danced in their heads. Japan was not militarily able to defend itself against much more powerful invaders; had none of these morons learned nothing from the Opium War between the British and the Chinese? Had they not seen the impressive display of technology Commodore Matthew Perry brought to Japan to embarrass our backwards and underdeveloped society? Japan could not withstand an attack from a foreign invader!

He had taken care of his enemies. After a ridiculous attempt by Tokugawa Nariaki and his supporters to denounce him in front of the emperor, Ii had a shogunal decree passed that allowed more power and proceeded to eliminate his enemies. During this time, he removed over one hundred officials that opposed him from the bakufu, the imperial court, and the lands of various daimyo. He was lenient; most of the officials were forced into retirement, and only eight were executed. Ii was able to force Hitotsubashi and his family under arrest, while his supporters, the ones who had purposely stopped him from seeking the emperor's council for the Harris treaty, were all forced into retirement. Ii suppressed a small smile. All of the government officials who had expressed even a shred of discontent over his political actions had been removed from public life.

That was almost two years ago, yet his friends still worried for his safety. Human worry was a funny thing, he had concluded long ago. It didn't make anything better, nor did it really change things. It only made the experience worse for the individual. Besides, he had made up his mind the moment Commodore Perry's black ships sailed within sight of Japan that he would do everything in his power to preserve Japan and to do the absolute best for his country.

The entrance to the Shogun's castle, the Sakurada gate, was approaching. The Shogun had requested his presence and he had dare not deny him. The Shogun was an impressive military man, broad of build, smart and tactful. He had obviously reached that position through hard work, and was not willing to let anyone forget it. He was a man Ii could respect.

His Edo Castle was massive, with towering buildings and tall walls and rivers. It was an impressive sight, and every time Ii came to see the Shogun, he could not help but be awed for a second or two. He blamed that on growing up in a monastery. He still had trouble getting used to his own comfortable quarters. Despite owning land and a spacious home, he had problems sleeping at night. Stress of political life? His work for the government was very stressful, but he took it all in stride. Fear for his life? His friends had been vocal about their concerns for him; perhaps he had subconsciously accepted them? He highly doubted that. It had been almost two years and there had been no attempts on his life. He was just used to having the light of the moon on his face and the cold of a stone floor on his back before falling asleep. Simple as that.

He turned around suddenly and stopped, staring intently into the darkness of the street behind him. But emptiness stared back. He had just sworn that he had seen a shadow move out of the corner of his eye...

“Did you see something?”

Ii mentally rolled his eyes. Guess this young samurai wasn't as adept as he'd originally given him credit for. He stood still for a few more seconds, willing the darkness to move, to prove the feeling in his stomach right, before answering. “I thought I saw a shadow.”

The young samurai paused before he hesitantly replied with, “It was probably just a stray animal. We shouldn't stay out in the street too long; we're vulnerable here.”

Finally, a sensible thing to come out of the young samurai's mouth. The street was dark, save for the few torches lit by the Sakurada gate, but even the light emitting from the torches only cut the darkness a half of a dozen feet in front of the gate. Otherwise, the street was mostly draped in shadows, with the moon the only visible object in the sky. The ominous feeling in his stomach only intensified. Now it felt like a nest of snakes had taken residence behind his belly button.

Both Ii and the samurai accompanying him moved away from the uncertain darkness towards the light of the Sakurada gate when there was a rustle behind them. There really wasn't time to act. One minute they were alone in a dark street, the next second, they were surrounded by about twenty armed samurai, and the young samurai who had been accompanying Ii had a sword through his belly.

The young samurai fell to his knees, blood gathering in an uneven pool around his knees. His mouth opened and closed silently, but his eyes spoke of pain and fear. The samurai who had shoved his sword unceremoniously through Ii's companion without warning suddenly withdrew the sword. The wounded samurai, who really was a boy, teetered for a few seconds before collapsing on the dirt. He didn't move again.

Ii quickly took in his surroundings. Twenty samurai stood around him, most with swords, but a few had guns. A gun he could not outrun. A sword on the other hand... He knew he could stand a chance against the swords if he could get to his fallen companion's swords. They lay in their sheaths tied to his hip, a few feet away. If he could just find an opportunity...

A samurai to his left lifted up his sword and charged at Ii with a battle cry. Ii took this chance to sidestep the advance and lunge for the forgotten swords. In that split second, everyone was moving; Ii was diving for the fallen samurai's weapons, and all of the other samurai were progressing on Ii. Then a sharp pop pierced the air.

All movement ceased. Ii collapsed on the dirt, his body no longer listening to the whims of his mind. The bitter smell of gun powder filled his nose and the coppery taste of blood overwhelmed his tongue. He knew he had been shot; his mind was crystal clear. He didn't know where he had been shot, he could not feel anything, nor could he lift his head to check for the wound. He knew he was going to die.

A samurai appeared in his vision. This man didn't seem older than Ii, and maybe in another life he could have been in Ii's shoes. In this life, he had blood spots on his face and on his clothes. However, the sword he lifted was as clear as water.

Ii turned his eyes to the moon for a final farewell before his world went dark.



Brittany Rook is a fifth year International Relation and East Asian Studies student, graduating in June 2016. Brittany has a passion for Asia, which has been cultivated by many language, history and language courses taken here at the University of Calgary. She plans to study Chinese for one year in China beginning in September, during which she will explore Asia (especially Japan!) and all its splendor. After that, Brittany plans to attend grad school to pursue a master's in Chinese relations.

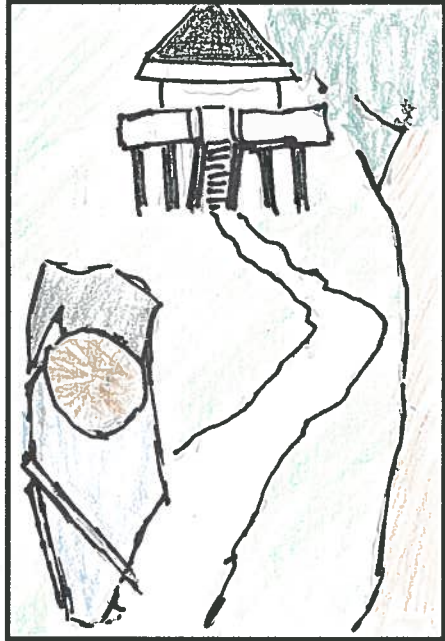
Susanoo and Yanata no Orochi

Jordan Weicker



Jordan Weicker, from Calgary, Alberta, is currently in his fourth year of studies in East Asian Languages, with a concentration in Mandarin. Jordan has always been interested in East Asian language and culture, particularly interested in calligraphy and manga.

Susano'o & Yamata-No-Orochi



〇 〇 〇 "what's wrong?"



our
Kushinada

he wants
to eat

o
o
o



Our



Kushinada!

One by One o o o

Our Daughters o o o



Yamata - No - Orochi !!



very well

Susano'o transformed Kushinada into a comb...



take my hand...



and hid her in his hair

3

4



He built a fence with 8 gates



o o o 8 tables



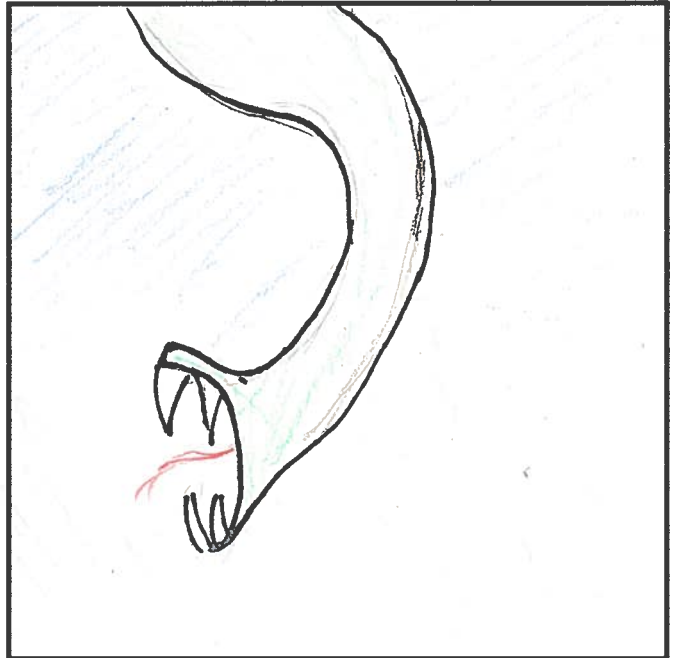
o o o 8 casks



of 8 times-brewed sake



ehhh . . . a fence ?



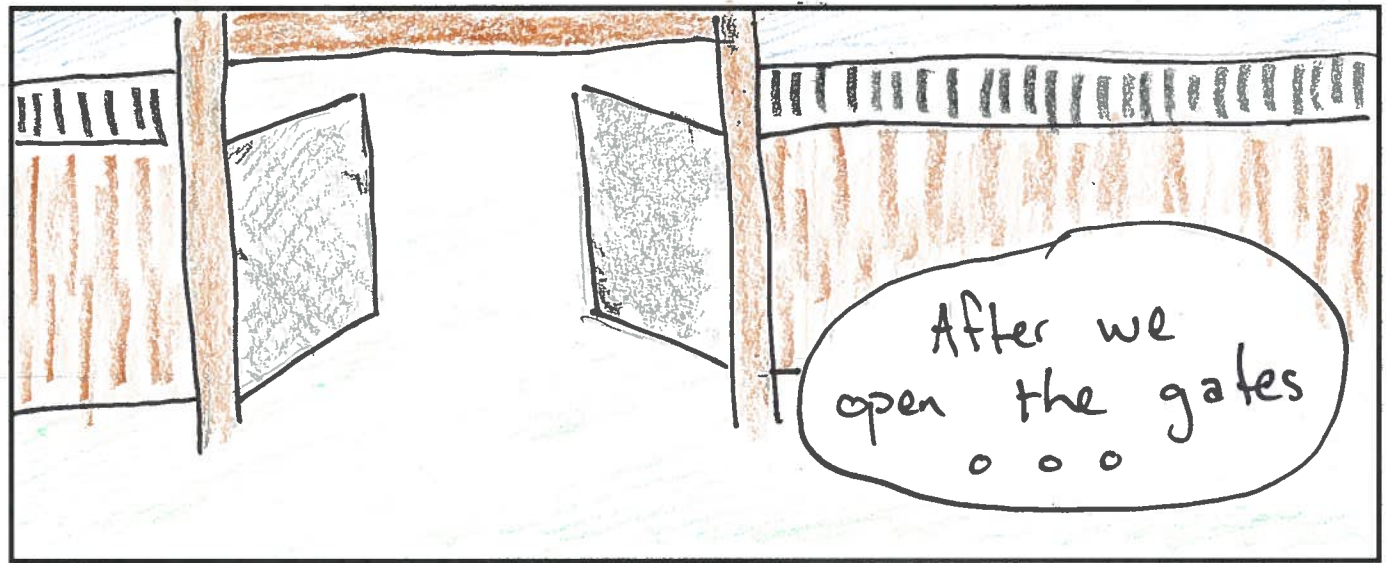
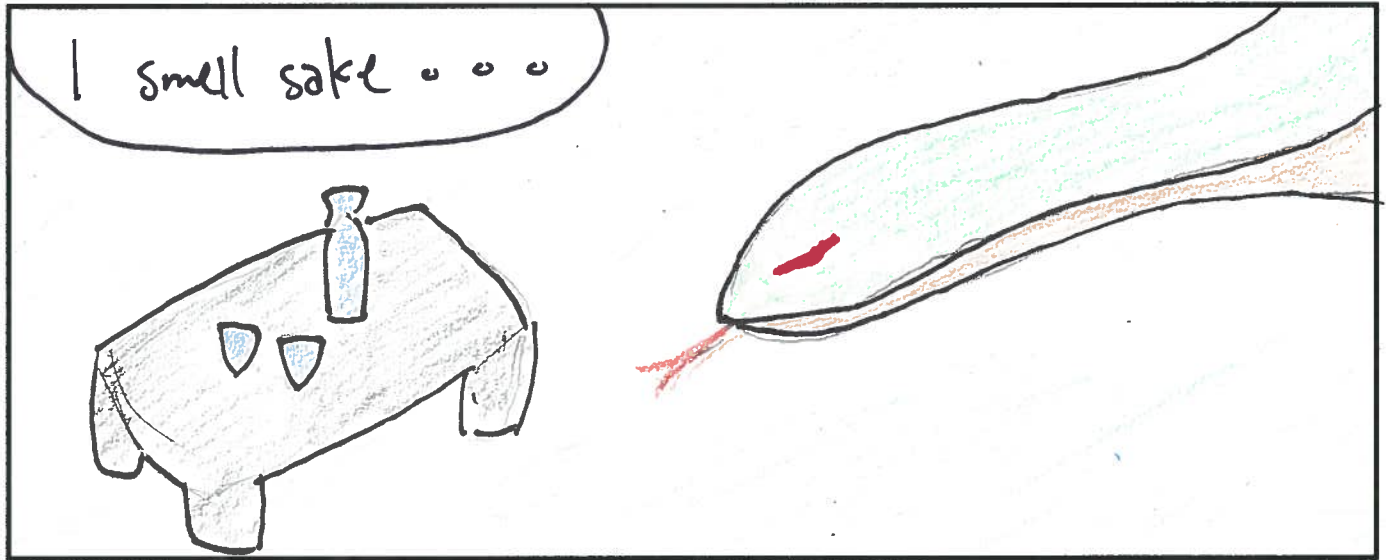
Smash it !



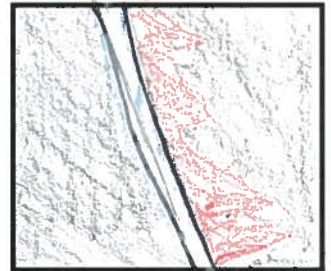
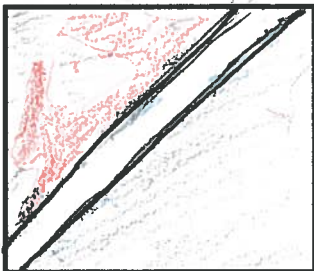
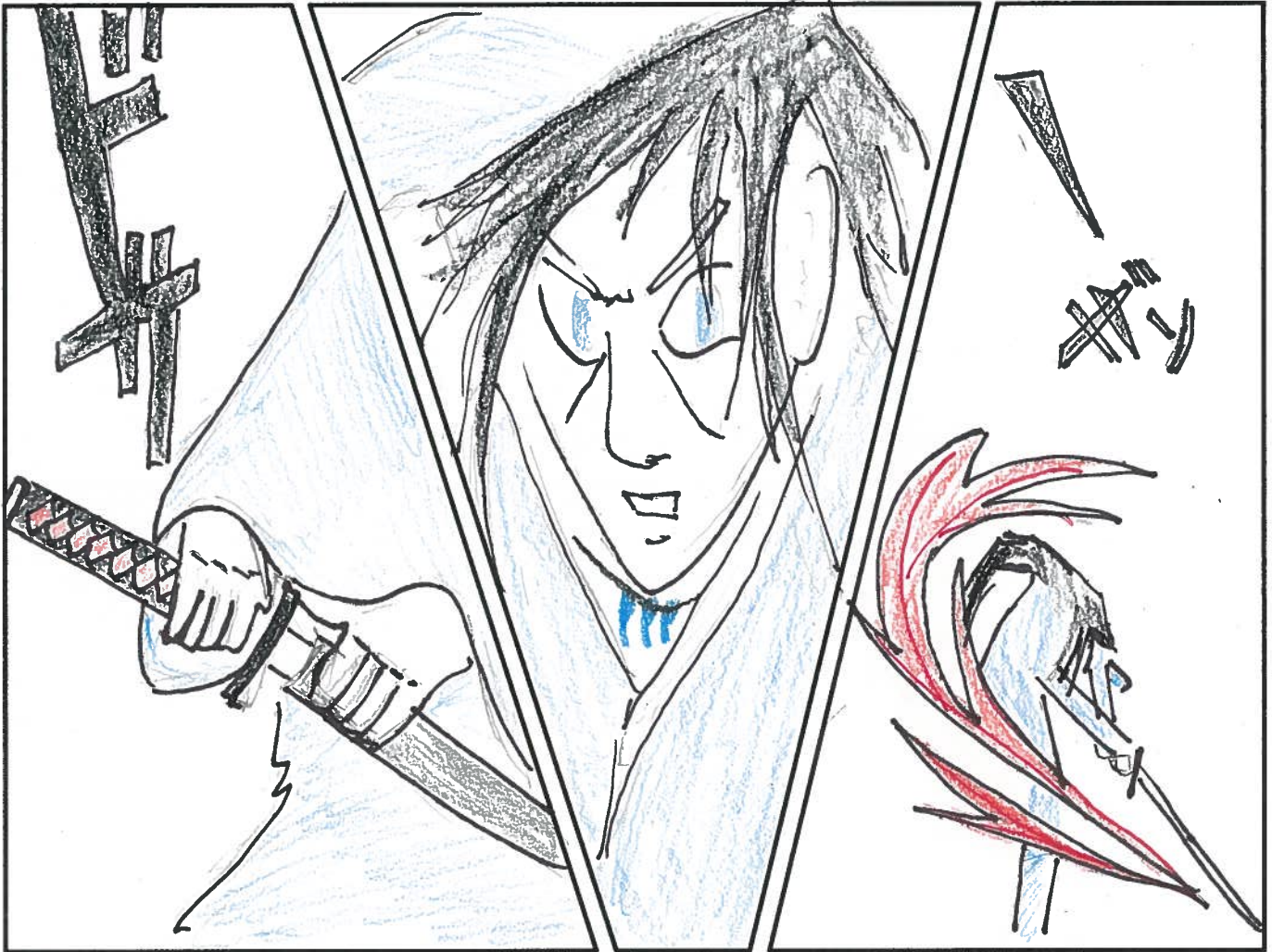
burn it !



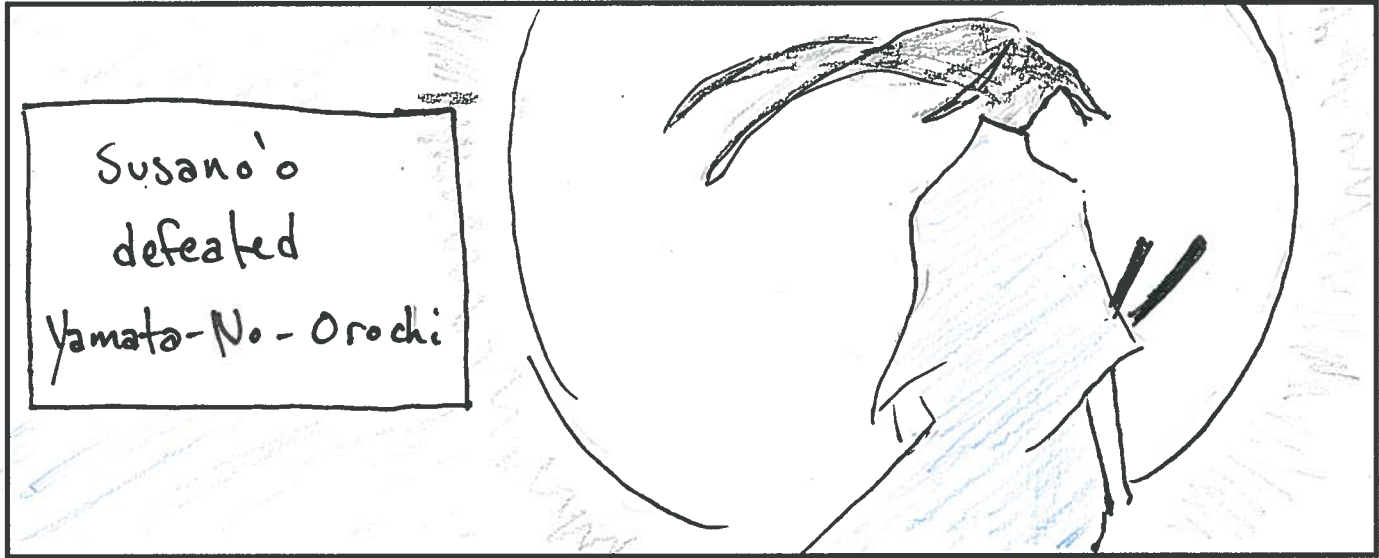
. . . stop



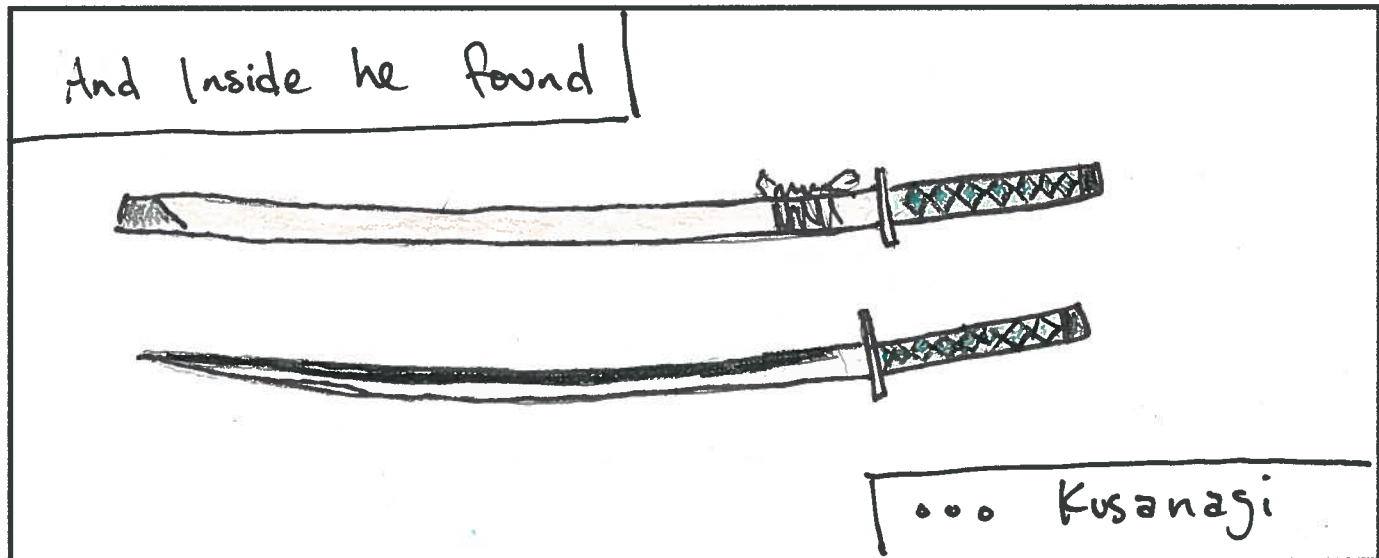
Susano'o waited for each head to drink its fill



o o o Then attacked!

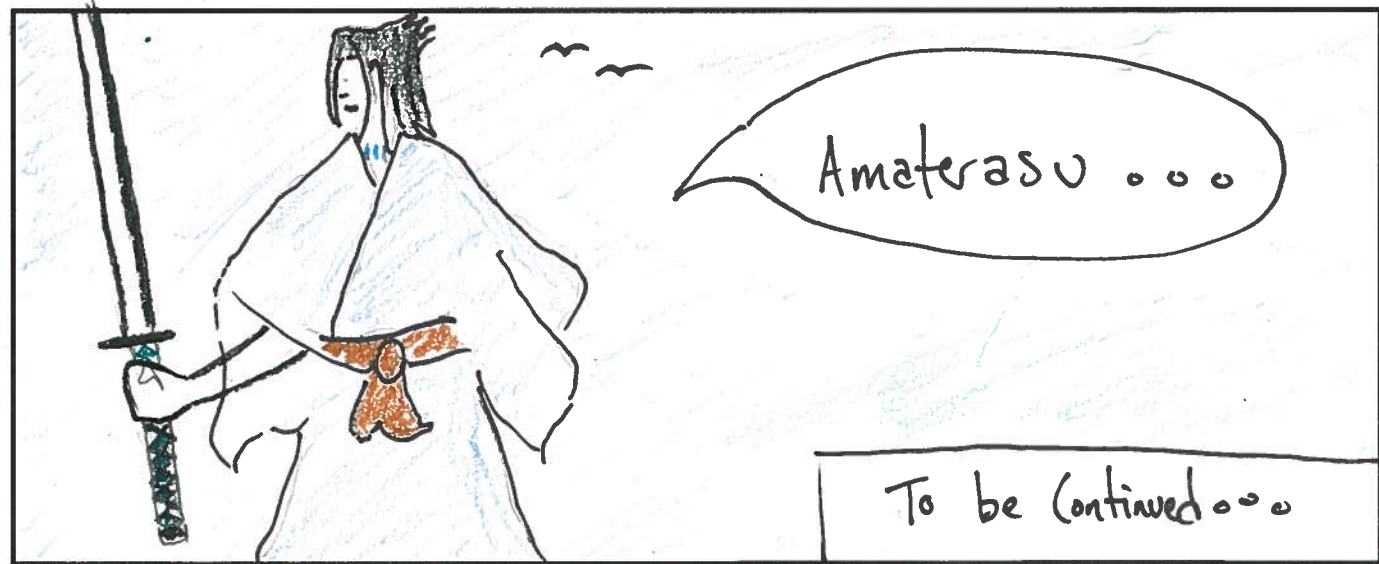


Susano'o
defeated
Yamato-No-Orochi



And inside he found

... Kusanagi



Amaterasu ...

To be continued ...

Yuugao

Jennifer Hong



Jennifer Hong is a second year student at the University of Calgary majoring in East Asian Language Studies. She is currently studying Japanese and Chinese, and is looking forward to her one month study abroad at Senshu University for 2016. Initially pulled in by Japanese popular culture, Jennifer has gradually come to fall in love with Japan's rich history, culture and language.

THIS PARTICULAR EPISODE OCCURS WHEN GENJI IS ON HIS WAY TO VISIT HIS MISTRESS THE WIDOWED LADY ROKUJOU. HE MAKES A DETOUR TO VISIT HIS WET NURSE WHO IS VERY ILL.

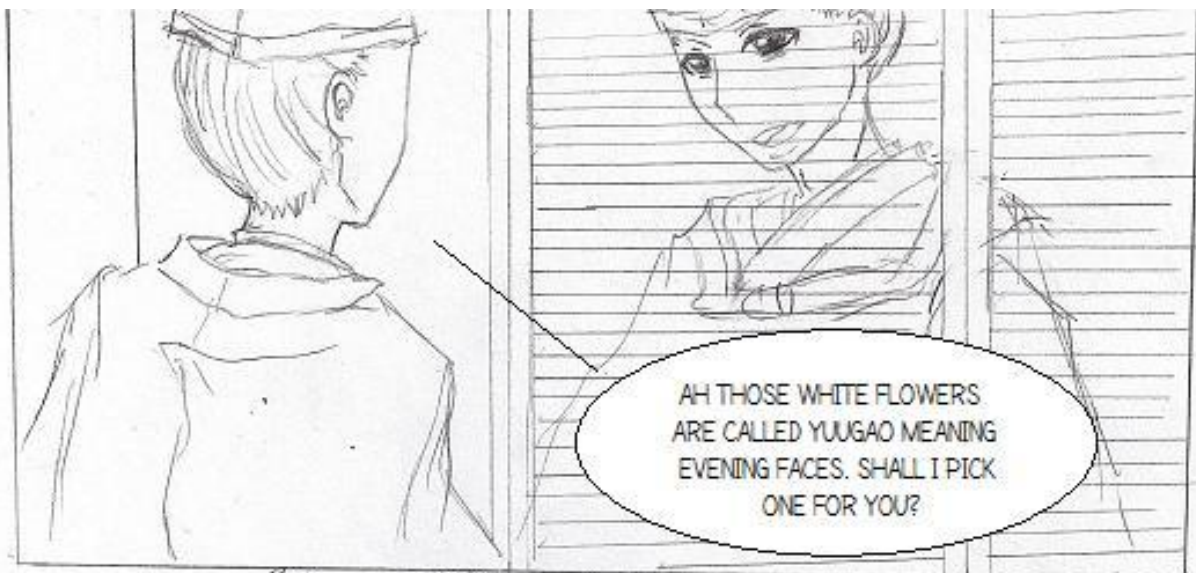


?

KACHA

KACHA

KOREMITSU,
THOSE FLOWERS...



AH THOSE WHITE FLOWERS
ARE CALLED YUGAO MEANING
EVENING FACES. SHALL I PICK
ONE FOR YOU?



PLEASE USE THIS TO
PLACE THE FLOWER
UPON.

I THINK I NEED NOT
ASK WHO'S FACE IT
IS.

SO BRIGHT, THIS
EVENING FACE, IN
THE SHINING DEW

THE FAN HAD
THE LOVELY
SCENT OF A
WOMAN'S
PERFUME. AND
A POEM
WRITTEN.



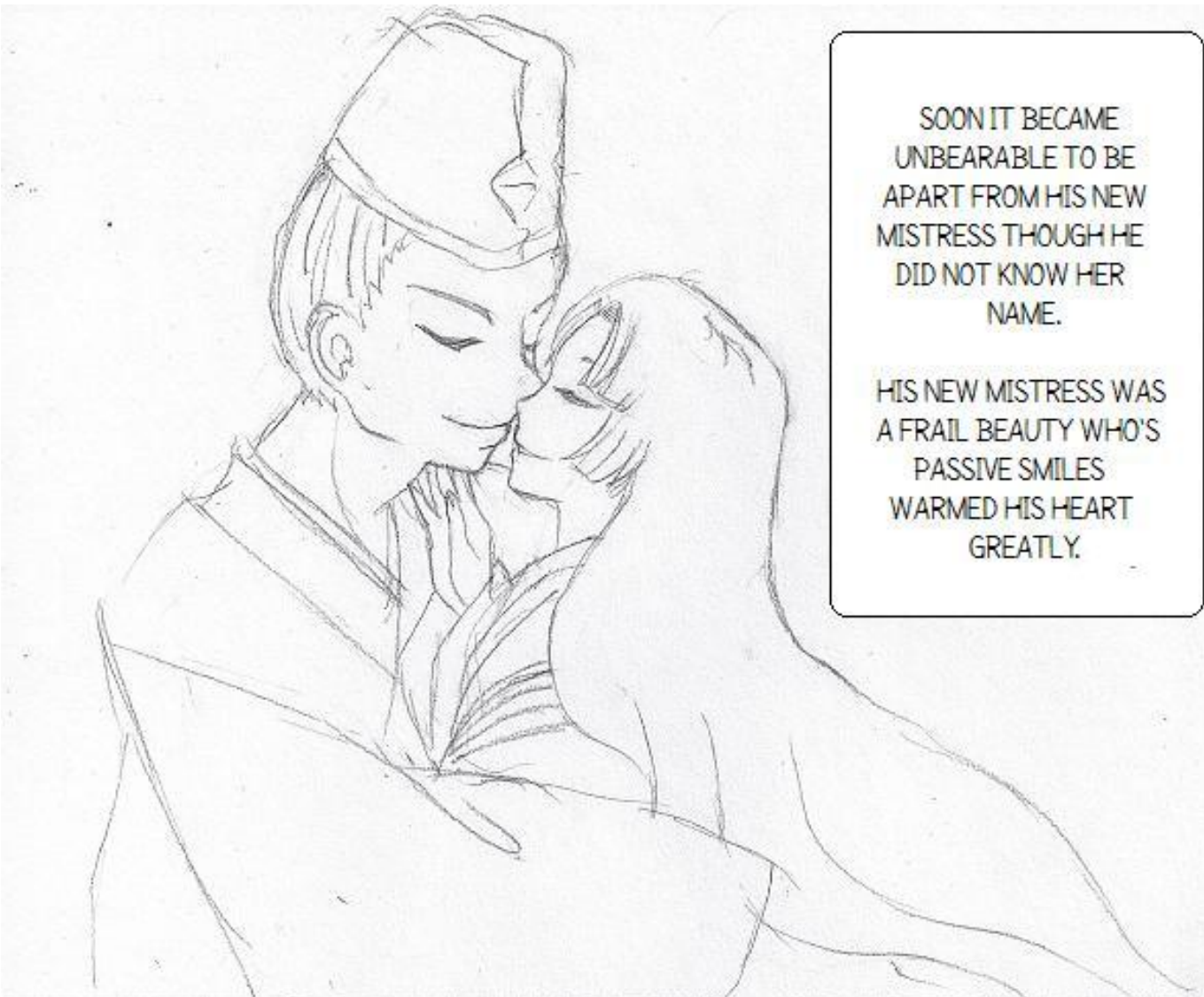
THE WRITING
IMPLIED A DELICATE
HAND OF A LADY OF
PEDIGREE. GENJI
WAS INTRIGUED.



DISGUIISING HIMSELF AS A COMMONER, GENJI
WENT TO SEEK OUT THE MYSTERIOUS LADY
OF THE HOUSE WHERE THE EVENING FACES
BLOSSOMED.




THUS THE STORY BEGINS
FOR ONE OF GENJI'S MANY
ROMANTIC AFFAIRS.




SOON IT BECAME
UNBEARABLE TO BE
APART FROM HIS NEW
MISTRESS THOUGH HE
DID NOT KNOW HER
NAME.


HIS NEW MISTRESS WAS
A FRAIL BEAUTY WHO'S
PASSIVE SMILES
WARMED HIS HEART
GREATLY.



I WISH TO
BE ALONE
WITH
YOU.




AND SO OFF THEY
WENT TO AN UNHABITED
MANSION TO SPEND THE
NIGHT.




ALTHOUGH
SURPRISED AT
FIRST SHE
GENTLY
SMILED IN
AGREEMENT.

SO PREOCCUPIED WITH HIS NEW MISTRESS AND NO LONGER HOLDING ANY FEELINGS FOR HIS PREVIOUS MISTRESS LADY ROKUJOU. LADY ROKUJOU IS OVERCOME WITH ANGER, SADNESS, AND JEALOUSY.




I WANT TO SEE YOU...

I WANT TO SEE YOU...



I WANT TO SEE YOU...



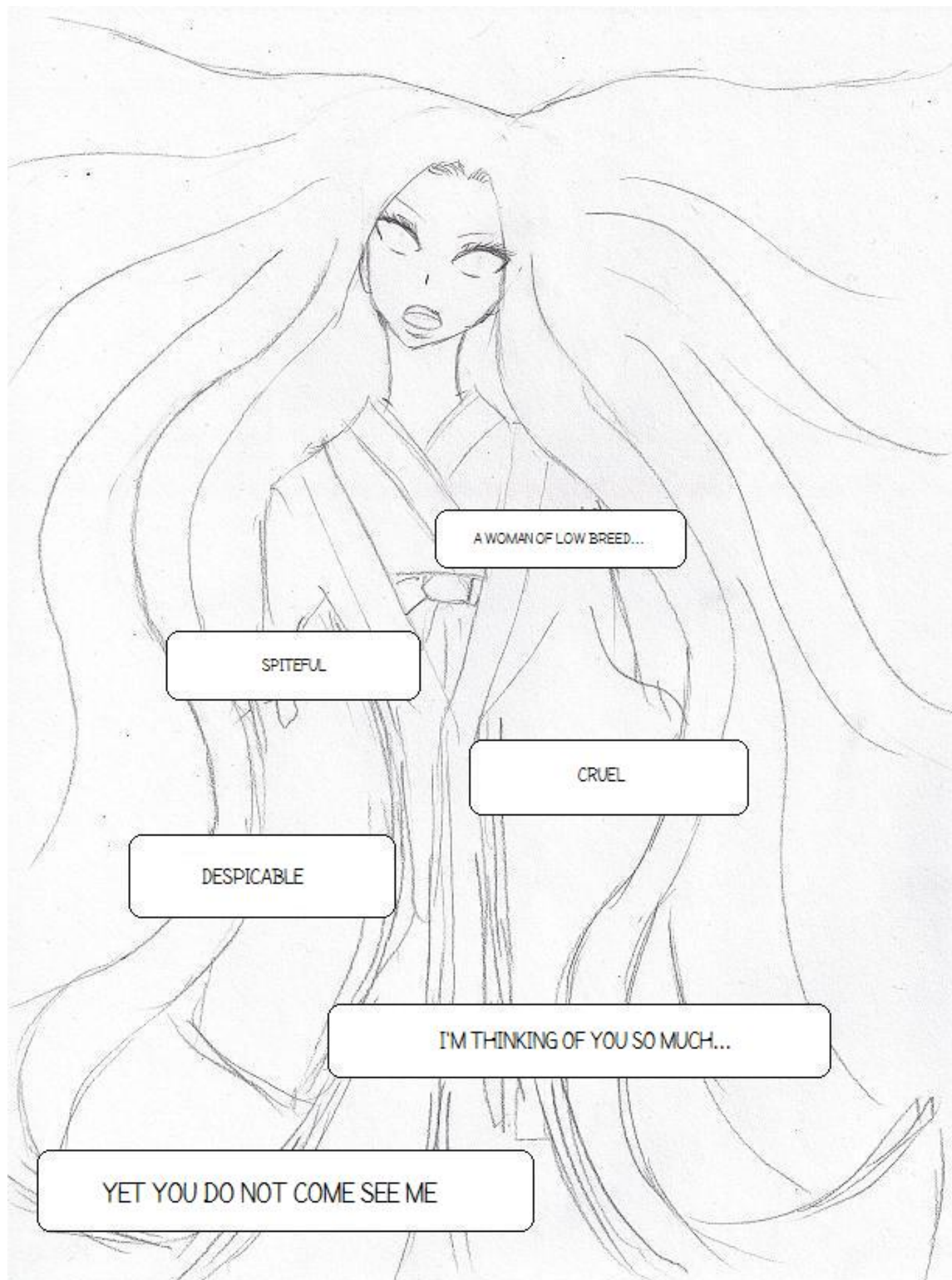
I WANT TO SEE YOU...

I WANT TO SEE YOU...

WILL YOU NO LONGER COME VISIT ME?



WHO GOES THERE??



A WOMAN OF LOW BREED...


SPITEFUL

CRUEL


DESPICABLE

I'M THINKING OF YOU SO MUCH...

YET YOU DO NOT COME SEE ME




A CURSE ON
YOU ALL!!!



IT CAN'T
BE...




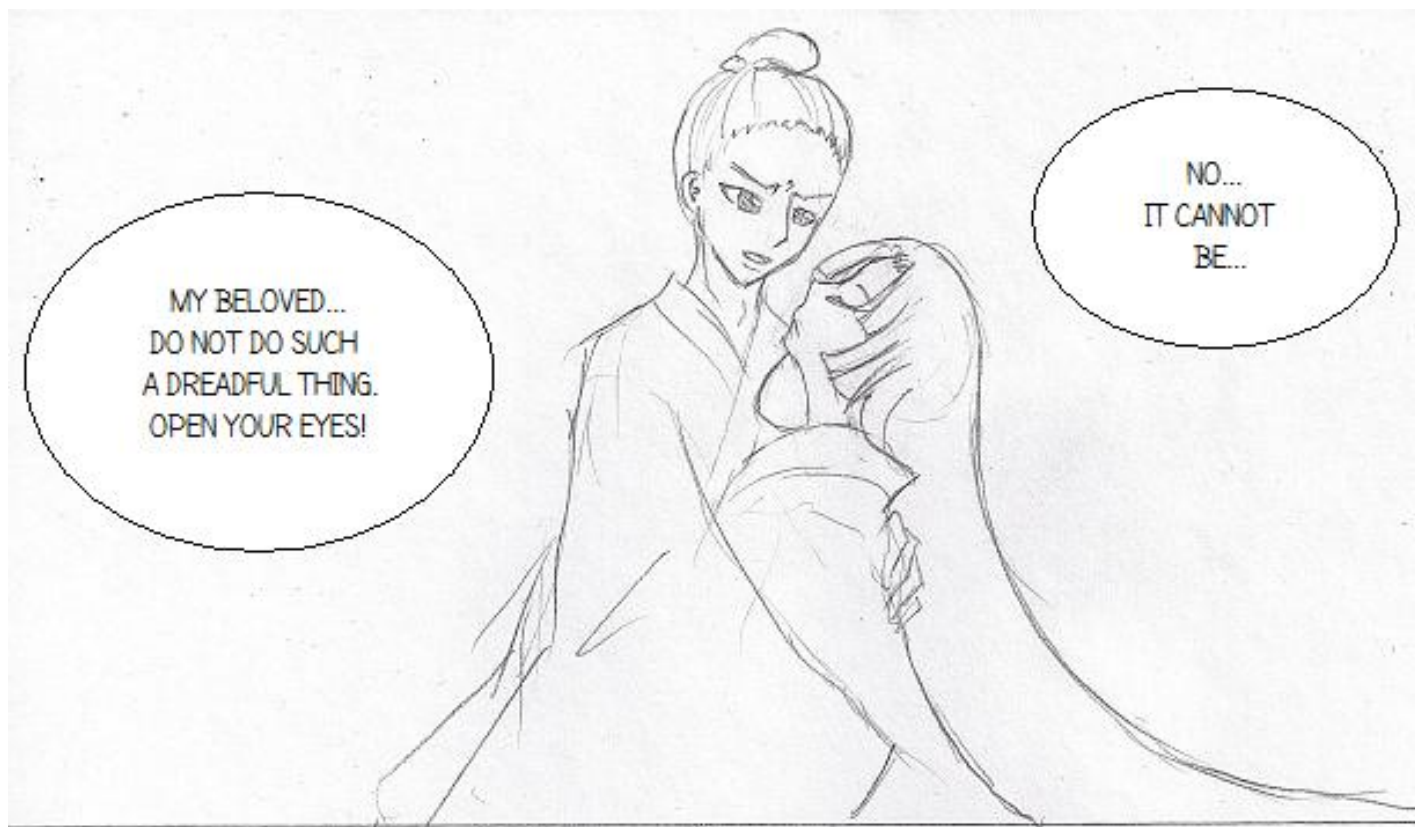
...



HER BREATHING SLOWED AND SHE
TREMBLED NO MORE.

THE GIRL'S FACE CONTORTED
IN PAIN AS IF EXPERIENCING A
DREADFUL NIGHTMARE
AND THEN...





MY BELOVED...
DO NOT DO SUCH
A DREADFUL THING.
OPEN YOUR EYES!

NO...
IT CANNOT
BE...

UPON HIS RETURN FROM THE FUNERAL, GENJI
SUCCUMBS TO ILLNESS AND FALLS OFF HIS HORSE.
DEVASTATED BY HIS LOSS, HE'S ILL FOR A LONG
TIME.

AFTER RECOVERING HE CALLS UPON HIS MISTRESS'S
ATTENDANT TO ASK WHY SHE HID HER NAME FROM
HIM.

KOREMITSU TAKES THE BODY AWAY TO A
NUNNERY TO PREVENT GENJI'S REPUTATION
FROM GETTING DAMAGED.

DONNING COMMONER CLOTHES ONCE MORE
GENJI ATTENDS HIS MISTRESS'S FUNERAL AND
IS RELIEVED TO SEE SHE NO LONGER LOOKS IN
PAIN.



YOUR
WORDS CUT
DEEP LIKE A
KNIFE.

MIGHT I REMIND YOU, YOU ALSO HID
YOUR NAME FROM HER. SHE THOUGHT
HERSELF UNIMPORTANT TO YOU.

FEELING MUCH REGRET
THEREIN ENDS HIS TRAGIC
LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE
GENTEEL LADY OF THE
EVENING FACES.

GENJI DISCOVERS SHE WAS
JUST NINETEEN. HER PARENTS
HAD DIED AND SHE WAS THE
MISTRESS OF HIS GOOD FRIEND
AND RIVAL, TOU NO CHUUJOU.
BUT RAN AWAY BECAUSE OF
THE JEALOUSY OF HIS WIFE.

I AM
REMORSEFUL...
COULD YOU TELL
ME MORE?

SIGH

VERY
WELL.



AND THEN...

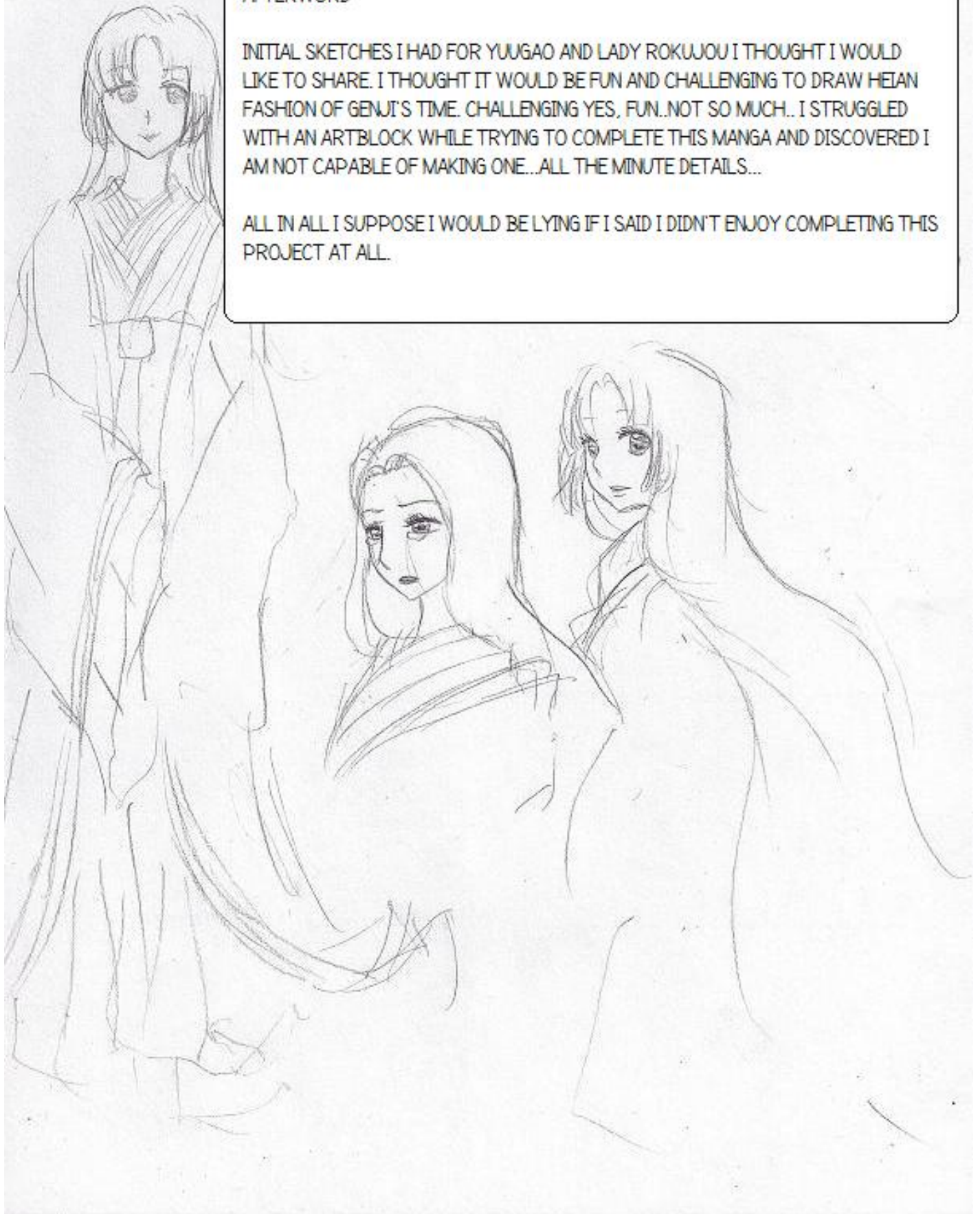
ANOTHER STORY BEGINS.



AFTERWORD

INITIAL SKETCHES I HAD FOR YUUGAO AND LADY ROKUJOU I THOUGHT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FUN AND CHALLENGING TO DRAW HEIAN FASHION OF GENJI'S TIME. CHALLENGING YES, FUN..NOT SO MUCH.. I STRUGGLED WITH AN ARTBLOCK WHILE TRYING TO COMPLETE THIS MANGA AND DISCOVERED I AM NOT CAPABLE OF MAKING ONE...ALL THE MINUTE DETAILS...

ALL IN ALL I SUPPOSE I WOULD BE LYING IF I SAID I DIDN'T ENJOY COMPLETING THIS PROJECT AT ALL.



The Devil is My Master?!

Jacqueline Laigo



Jacqueline Laigo (or "Jackie") is an Open Studies student at the University of Calgary hoping to pursue East Asian Language Studies with a concentration in Japanese. Jackie has been interested in Japanese language and culture since elementary school and after having travelled to Japan twice, hopes to teach English there in the future. Jackie is most likely known for wearing different hats almost every day.



THERE, THERE, I'M SORRY FOR WAKING YOU SO EARLY.

BE A GOOD BOY AND COME ALONG, WON'T YOU?

SNORT

MORI RANMARU



IT'S JUST, I HAVE A FEELING HE'LL WANT TO GO RIDING TODAY... I HOPE I'M RIGHT.



WAIT HERE, MY FRIEND.




THE HATANO CLAN MUST BE SUBDUED. TAKE YOUR MEN TO TAMBA AND BRING BACK PROOF OF THEIR SURRENDER, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YES, MY LORD.



U-UM, EXCUSE ME...
AM I INTERRUPTING...?



NOT AT ALL. IN
FACT, I WAS
JUST LEAVING.

AKECHI-SAN...
HE'S ONE OF
MY LORD'S
TOP GENERALS.
HE'S A BIT SCARY,
BUT HE'S GOOD
AT HIS JOB.

AKECHI MITSUhide



DON'T MIND HIM,
RAN. YOU'RE ALWAYS
WELCOME TO VISIT ME.

MY LORD
NOBUNAGA/
HIS DREAM
IS TO UNIFY
JAPAN, BUT
NOT EVERYONE
SEES HIM AS
A LEADER LIKE
I DO.

ODA NOBUNAGA



AH, IS THAT
MY HORSE...?

OH, YES! I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT WANT TO
GO RIDING TODAY...




EXCELLENT! ON POINT
AS ALWAYS, RAN. YOU'LL
BE COMING WITH ME, WON'T
YOU? OF COURSE
YOU WILL.

"PAT"



EHEH, YES,
MY LORD.

MY LORD,
THE SAME
AS ALWAYS.
IT'S BEEN
LIKE THIS
FOR AS LONG
AS I CAN
REMEMBER.



MY FATHER HAD JUST JOINED THE ODA CLAN, AND HE WAS SHOWING ME AROUND ONE DAY.

I WAS ONLY 6 WHEN WE FIRST SAW EACH OTHER, BUT MY LORD INSTANTLY SHOWED AN INTEREST IN ME.

IT WAS THEN AGREED THAT I WAS TO BECOME A PAGE ONCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH IN EXCHANGE FOR MY FAMILY'S PROTECTION.

MY BROTHERS WOULD JOIN ME LATER AS SOLDIERS, BUT AT THAT MOMENT, I HAD NO IDEA HOW MUCH MY LIFE WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE.

WHEN THE DAY OF MY EMPLOYMENT CAME, MY FATHER MADE ME PROMISE SOMETHING...

PROMISE ME YOU'LL PROTECT LORD NOBUNAGA NO MATTER WHAT, OKAY?

YES, FATHER!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, BOY?

MORI RANMARU, MY LORD!

FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL DO AS I SAY, UNDERSTOOD?

YES, MY LORD!

GOOD, I HOPE WE WILL GET ALONG WELL.

"PAT"

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH PEOPLE FEARED HIM BACK THEN. HE DIDN'T SEEM LIKE SUCH A BAD PERSON...

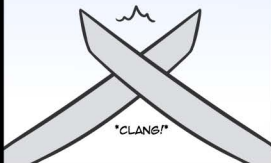
HE'S ALSO A GREAT TEACHER!
HE TAUGHT ME THE ART OF TEA
CEREMONY AND CALLIGRAPHY, NOT
TO MENTION HOW TO BE A GOOD
SAMURAI!



HE MAY BE RUTHLESS AND A BIT
TEMPERMENTAL, BUT HE HAD A
NOBLE DREAM OF A UNIFIED
JAPAN.



I JUST WISH PEOPLE COULD
SEE LORD NOBUNAGA THE WAY
I DO, YOU KNOW?



IT'S NOT
THAT I DON'T
BELIEVE
YOU, NII-SAN,
BUT I THINK
YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE
WHO'S EVER
SEEN HIS
CALMER
SIDE.




I GUESS... BUT ISN'T IT
UNFAIR TO JUDGE HIM
WITHOUT REALLY
KNOWING HIM?




YOU SPEAK OF LORD
NOBUNAGA SO FONDLY,
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU
HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM-





MY LORD, THE HATANO HAVE AGREED TO COOPERATE UNDER A PEACE TREATY. NO BLOOD HAS BEEN NEEDLESSLY SHED.



A PEACE TREATY ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH. HAVE THEIR LEADERS EXECUTED AT ONCE.



BUT MY LORD, THEY HAVE MY MOTHER HELD HOSTAGE TO ENSURE WE KEEP OUR SIDE OF THE TREATY!

MY LORD...!




REMEMBER YOUR PLACE! I AM YOUR LEADER, AND YOU WILL DO AS I SAY.

THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO, RAN-MARU.



GRR, I WON'T FORGET THIS!

MY LORD...



I KNOW HE HAS HIS REASONS, BUT IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY...?

UH, DON'T WORRY,
NII-SAN! WE'RE STILL
ON YOUR SIDE!

THANKS,
GUYS...

I JUST HOPE EVERYTHING
TURNS OUT ALRIGHT...

A FEW YEARS HAVE PASSED
SINCE THAT INCIDENT, BUT IT
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THEIR
RELATIONSHIP HAS
IMPROVED...

COME, DRINK
WITH ME!

YOU KNOW
I DON'T DRINK!

LET GO OF ME,
YOU DRUNKEN
HARLOT!

THE NAME SUITS
A BRUTE LIKE YOU!
IT'S YOUR FAULT MY
MOTHER DIED AT
THE HANDS OF THE
HATANO!

"DRUNKEN HARLOT"?!
YOU'LL LOSE YOUR HEAD
FOR THAT!

I- I THINK IT'S
TIME FOR BED,
MY LORD...!

HMPH, I SUPPOSE
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR
TONIGHT. I WILL DEAL
WITH AKECHI LATER.



I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD'VE SNAPPED AT AKECHI-SAN LIKE THAT, MY LORD... IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S STILL HURT OVER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH...



I SEE... I APOLOGIZE FOR MY BEHAVIOUR TONIGHT.

BUT I ASSURE YOU MY REASONS FOR EXECUTING THE HATANO WERE FOR THE BEST.



THE HATANO WERE UNTRUSTWORTHY, AND IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE MY DREAM, I MUST ELIMINATE ANY THREATS THAT STAND IN MY WAY.



RANMARU, DO YOU SEE ME AS A VILLAIN?

OF COURSE NOT, MY LORD!



I SEE. I AM GLAD I CAN ALWAYS TRUST YOU, MY LOYAL PAGE.



COME NOW, YOU MUST BE TIRED. LET'S GET SOME REST.

PAT

A FEW DAYS LATER...

AHH, WHAT NICE WEATHER!
TODAY IS A GOOD DAY TO
VISIT HONNO-JI.



I'M GLAD MY LORD IS IN A
BETTER MOOD TODAY. HE'S
BEEN IN A FUNK SINCE HIS
FIGHT WITH AKECHI-SAN.



MY LORD AND I WERE ACTUALLY
SUPPOSED TO BE TOURING THE KANSAI
REGION WITH LORD TOKUGAWA, BUT ONE
OF THE GENERALS NEEDED REINFORCEMENTS,
SO WE'RE HERE TO SEND OFF AKECHI-SAN
WHILE WE STAY AT HONNO-JI. MY LORD'S
BIRTHDAY IS SOON, SO I HOPE THE SURPRISE
PARTY I'M PLANNING FOR HIM WILL HELP
CHEER HIM UP!

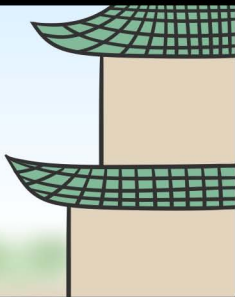


WELL, IT LOOKS
LIKE SOMEONE'S
HAPPY!

THINKING ABOUT LORD
NOBUNAGA AGAIN, AREN'T
YOU? HEH, YOU'RE THE
SAME AS ALWAYS,
NII-SAN.



NAGATAKA, NAGAUJI!
DON'T TEASE ME, YOU
TWO...



HMPH, ENJOY YOUR PEACE
WHILE YOU CAN, NOBUNAGA.
I WILL GET MY REVENGE SOON
ENOUGH.



THE ENEMY...
IS IN HONNO-JI!!



FIRE?!

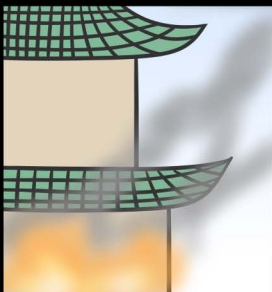
STAY HERE, MY LORD!
I THINK WE MAY BE
UNDER ATTACK!



RAN...?

RANMARU...!







TCH, THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM! WE'LL BE OVERRUN SOON!

"CLANG!"



NII-SAN, YOU SHOULD GO BACK AND PROTECT LORD NOBUNAGA!



BUT I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU TWO IN THE MIDDLE OF BATTLE!

FORGET ABOUT US! LORD NOBUNAGA IS MORE IMPORTANT!



IT'S YOUR JOB TO PROTECT HIM, ISN'T IT? YOU SHOULD BE BY HIS SIDE, NOT HERE!



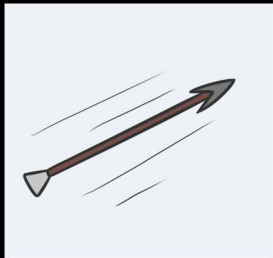
LEAVE THE REST TO US, NII-SAN. WE'LL BE FINE.




I'M SORRY WE HAVE TO PART LIKE THIS, NASATAKA, NASAJI. BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, I MADE A PROMISE TO PROTECT LORD NOBUNAGA NO MATTER WHAT.

HURRY, NII-SAN!


MEANWHILE...





MY BROTHERS AND SOME OTHER ATTENDANTS SHOULD HOLD THEM OFF FOR NOW, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME TO CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS-

IT'S NO USE. THEY WON'T GET HERE IN TIME.




THE ONLY WAY OUT IS THROUGH DEATH, AND I WOULD RATHER HAVE A NOBLE ONE THAN TO DIE AT A TRAITOR'S HANDS. HOWEVER, MY REMAINS MUST BE BURNT BEFORE MISTUhide CAN CLAIM MY HEAD, SO I WANT YOU TO SET THIS ROOM ON FIRE, RAN.

BUT, MY LORD...!

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY, RANMARU!



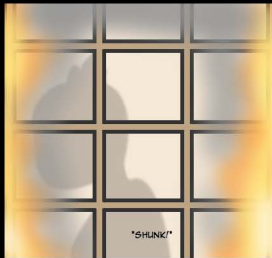
I AM GLAD TO HAVE LIVED ALONGSIDE YOU, MY MOST LOYAL PAGE. YOU HAVE SERVED ME WELL, SO PLEASE GRANT ME THIS FINAL REQUEST.



I TRUST YOU TO CARRY OUT YOUR DUTY. DON'T LET THEM IN, RAN.



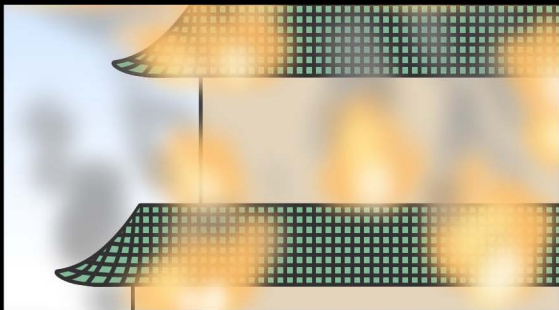
...YES, MY LORD.



I AM SURE YOUR FOLLOWERS
WILL CARRY ON YOUR LEGACY, MY
LORD... BUT IT SEEMS MY DREAM
ENDS HERE...



...I DID WELL,
RIGHT, MY LORD?



END

Sengoku Mochi

Rebecca Yuen



Rebecca Yuen is a Linguistics major at the University of Calgary. She has a strong interest in Japanese culture/music, which began through the influence of her older sisters. To create her final project, Rebecca used a tablet and Photoshop to draw for the first time! This frustrated her in the beginning, as it took her many hours to draw just one page. However, she eventually got better and faster at using these tools, especially after she decided that her characters were fine without hair and clothes!

Sengoku mochi

BY REBECCA YUEN

16TH CENTURY JAPAN...

FOR ALMOST 150 YEARS, THE SMALL ISLAND COUNTRY WAS FACED WITH POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND BATTLES.

HOWEVER, THAT ALL CAME TO AN END WITH THE POWER OF THREE INCREDIBLE MEN...

JAPAN HAS BEEN
AT WAR FOR
FAR TOO LONG...

INDEED, WE MUST
WORK TOGETHER
TO UNIFY OUR
COUNTRY.

WE MUST
BRING PEACE!
BUT VIOLENCE
IS NOT THE
ANSWER.

OUR ONLY OPTION LEFT IS TO....

MAKE DELICIOUS
MOCHI RICE CAKES!!!

ODA NOBLINAGA



AH YES,
THIS PLAN IS
BRILLIANT~

TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI



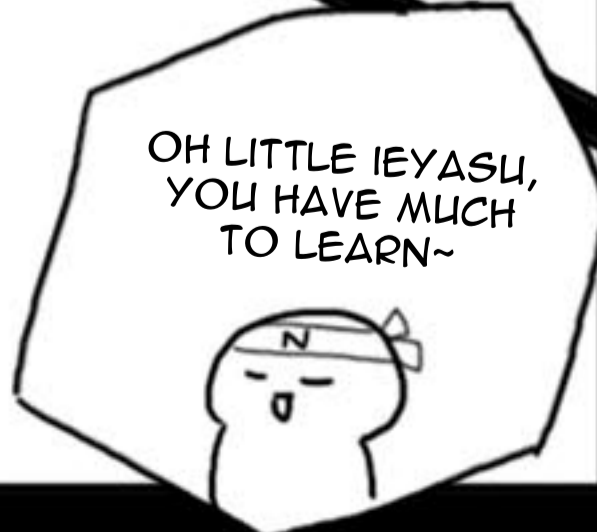
OUR MOCHI WILL
SURELY BRING
SWEET JOY TO ALL!

TOKUGAWA
IEYASU



I ALSO
LIKE MOCHI!
BUT HOW
DOES
ONE MAKE
IT?

OH LITTLE IEYASU,
YOU HAVE MUCH
TO LEARN~



MOCHI MAKING TOOLS



YESSIR!



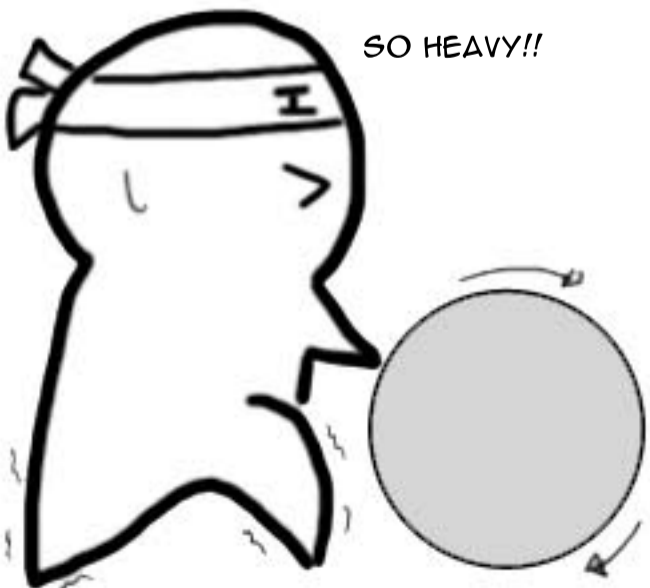
MAKE SURE
IT'S STEAMED
PROPERLY,
HIDEYOSHI-SAN!

FIRST,
YOU MUST
STEAM
GLUTINOUS
RICE IN A
WOODEN
'SEIRO'.

ONCE THE RICE
IS FINISHED,
YOU USE A
'KINE' (MALLET)
TO POUND THE RICE
INTO MOCHI.



SO HEAVY!!



THE RICE IS POUNDED
IN A LARGE
'USU' (MORTAR)
CAUTION...
IT'S SUPER HEAVY!

(SOMETIMES 3 PEOPLE
ARE ACTUALLY NEEDED
TO HELP MOVE IT)





THE MOCHI RICE
IS READY~



HOHO~
YOU DID WELL
ROLLING THAT
BY YOURSELF
IEYASHI-KUN!



MOCHI MAKING ROLES

ALRIGHT, SO I WILL BE THE 'TSUKITE', THE ONE WHO POUNDS THE RICE!



CAN I BE THE 'KAESHITE', NOBUNAGA-SAMA?

THE TURNER



YES, DO YOU REMEMBER HOW TO DO IT? BETWEEN EACH TIME I SWING, YOU MUST QUICKLY FOLD THE MOCHI. DON'T FORGET TO WET YOUR HAND BEFORE YOU DO IT.

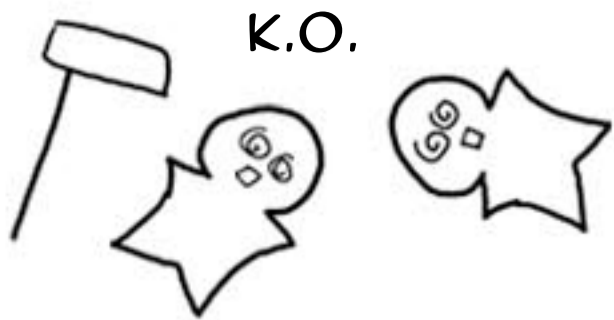
AND LASTLY, IEYASU-KUN, YOU CAN HAVE THE EASY JOB OF MAKING THE MOCHI CAKES. USE THE SWEET BEAN PASTE AS THE FILLING, AND THE KINAKO FLOUR TO COAT THE MOCHI EXTERIOR.



OK LET'S START!!!

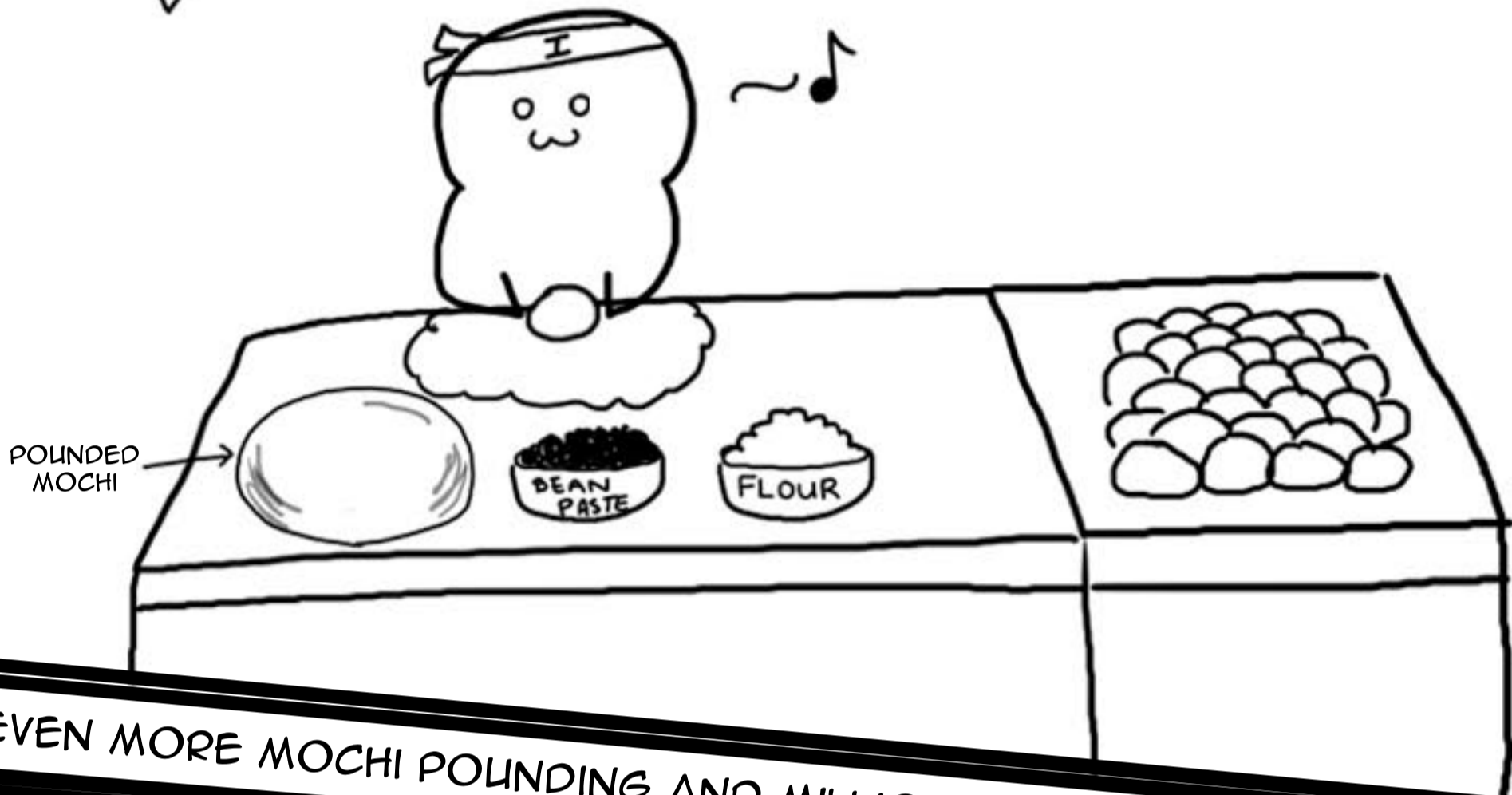


SUCH AMAZING SPEED!!



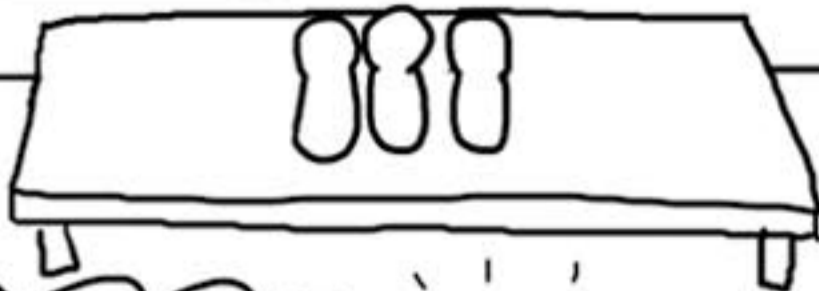
K.O.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...



EVEN MORE MOCHI POUNDING AND MILLIONS OF MOCHI CAKES LATER...

PEOPLE OF JAPAN! IT'S TIME THAT WE PUT A STOP TO THE ENDLESS CONFLICT WITHIN OUR COUNTRY. FOR TOO LONG, WE HAVE BEEN DIVIDED...BUT TODAY, WE HAVE GATHERED YOU ALL HERE TO BEGIN A NEW ERA. WITH THESE MAGICAL MOCHI CAKES WE HAVE PREPARED, LET US ENJOY THEM TOGETHER AS ONE! LET US ENJOY THEM TOGETHER IN PEACE! WHO'S WITH US?!

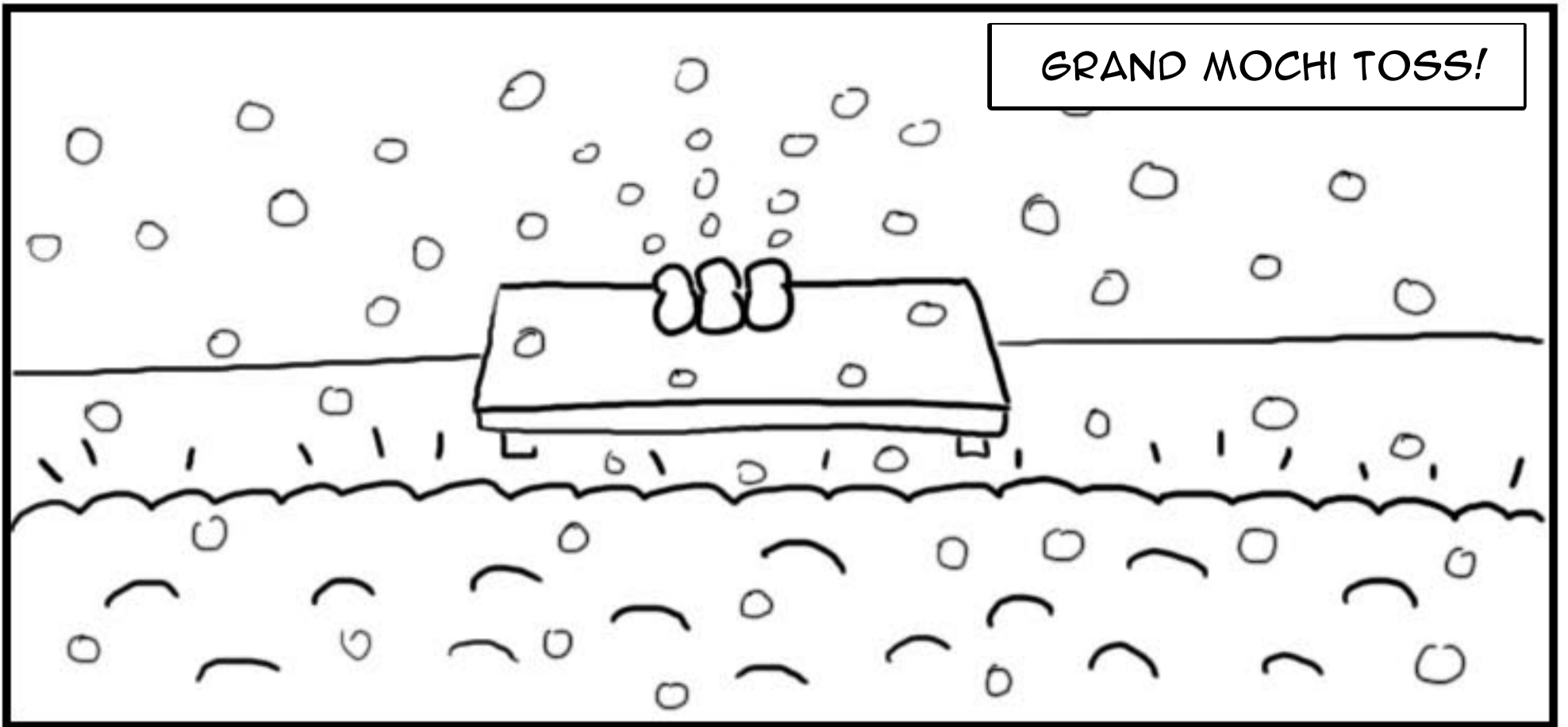


WOOHOO!!

YEAHH!!

MOCHIII~!!

GRAND MOCHI TOSS!



OH MY,
THIS MOCHI IS SO
DELICIOUS!

IT TRULY IS MAGICAL!
IT'S LIKE ALL MY
FEELINGS OF HATE ARE
MELTING AWAY!

I'M SO HAPPY!
LET'S BE FRIENDS,
NEIGHBOUR!

AND THUS, THE UNIFICATION OF JAPAN WAS
SUCCESSFUL AND CHAOS WAS NO MORE.

END

Notes: Mochi rice cake is a traditional snack that is most popular during the Japanese New Year. It is a symbol of happiness! The high-speed process of traditional mochi pounding is fun and exciting to watch! Lastly, the mochi toss is a celebration event - for example, when a building has been completed, the builders throw mochi (wrapped in bags) from the roof. Overall, mochi brings happiness and also brings people together :)

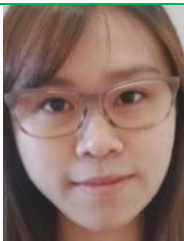
Draw My Life execution style to retell the tale of 47 Ronin

Nghi Tu



View the video at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/sBVD2vRBiZA>



Mikki Nghi Tu, an Operation Management student at the Haskayne School of Business and minoring in Political Science with a focus in world politics. I have been fascinated by the Japanese culture and lifestyle after my trip to Kyoto when I was ten years old. Always interested in a good complex organization system, Japan is like a rubric cube to me - classy and mysterious when needs to be solved.

Old Japan Redux 2

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