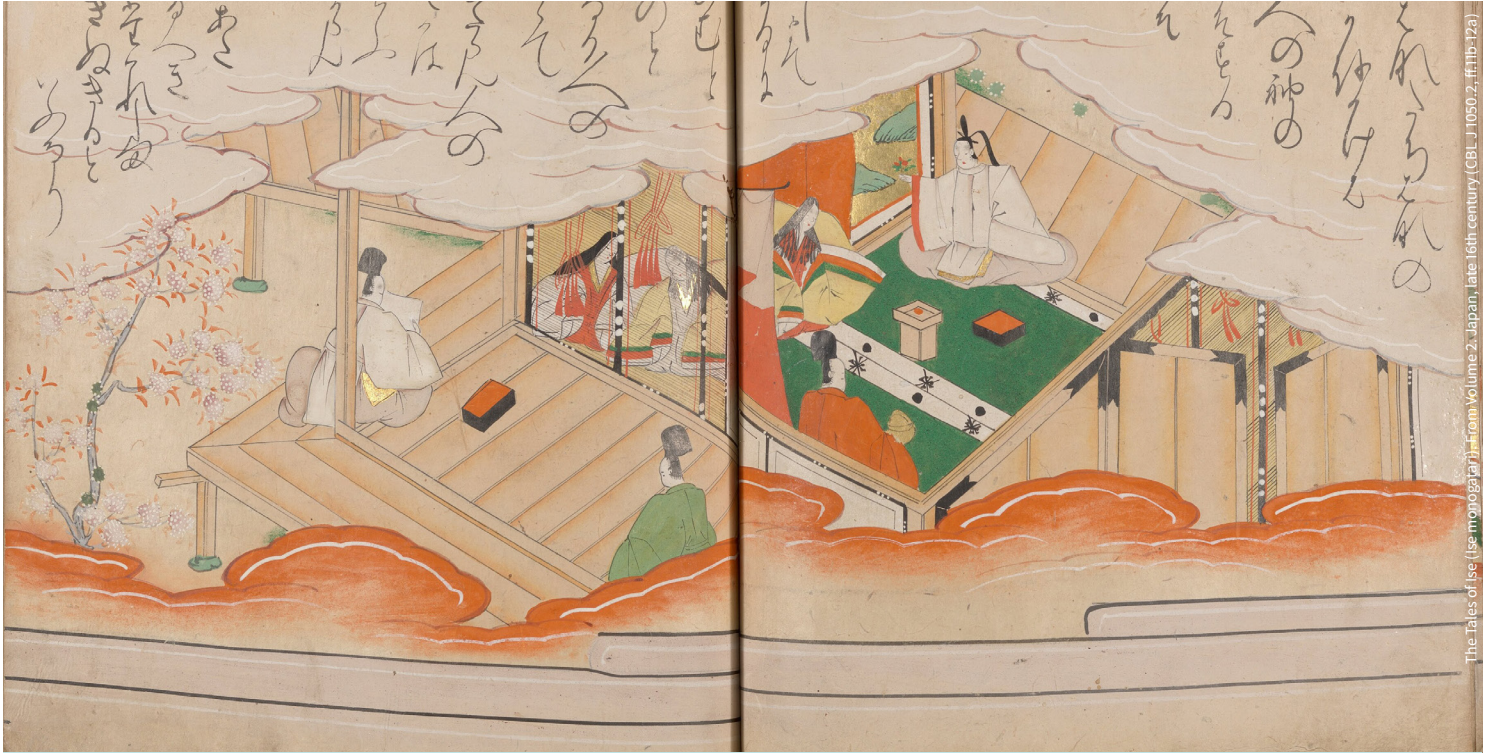




Did I dream it? Was it real? – Intertextuality in *Ise monogatari* and *Genji monogatari*

PhD Colloquium Guest Lecture

by Prof. Machiko Midorikawa, Waseda University, Tokyo

Friday, May 22, 2026, 14:00–15:45, Room ZUB 3-317, Zürichbergstrasse 4, 8032 Zurich

Medieval and early modern commentaries on *Genji monogatari* discuss the use of techniques that would now be termed forms of “intertextuality.” Scholars have long studied the influence of the *Ise monogatari* on *Genji monogatari*. Some well-known examples are found in the “Waka Murasaki” chapter, which makes use of phrases taken from section 69 and other parts of the older poem-tale collection. Section 69 is the episode in which the *mukashi otoko* (Narihira) breaks a strict religious taboo in having sexual relations with the Ise Priestess. The “Waka Murasaki” chapter draws on this episode in the depiction of Genji’s forbidden relationship with his step-mother Fujitsubo.

Beyond the purely literary links between the two texts, we must also consider the possible influence of gossip that spread about Narihira’s relations with the Priestess. It was rumoured that a son was born of the brief encounter. Early writings hint at this, while later *Ise* commentaries even identify the child by name. I will argue that we must look beyond simple verbal links and examine

more closely the historical and cultural context for clues about the texts emerged and were interpreted.

Machiko Midorikawa is an invited researcher of the Institute of Classical Japanese Studies, Waseda University, where she received a doctorate in 2005. Her monograph *Genji monogatari eiyaku ni tsuite no kenkyū* (2010) was awarded the Twelfth Murasaki Shikibu Research Award. Journal publications include “In between interpretation, commentary, and literature: the aesthetic sense in English translations of the *Tale of Genji*” (2024), “A World of Indirectness: Notes Toward a Study of Characterization in the ‘Tale of Genji’” (2022) and “Shifting Words from *Monogatari* to *Shōsetsu*: The Translation of Internal Speech in Japanese Literature” (2014).

This lecture takes place in the context of the PhD Colloquium in Japanese Philology and welcomes graduate-level students to the discussions of research methodologies in Japanology.