

Chapter IV

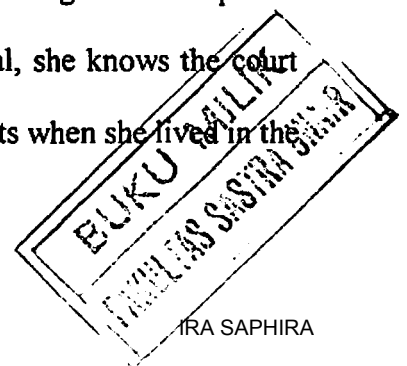
Hikaru Genji's Affairs Related to His Will to Power

In order to give a brief and further analysis of *The Tale of Genji*, the intrinsic and sociocultural approaches are used. The approaches represent what had occurred in the novel. The intrinsic approach will cover the setting, the character, and the plot of the story. The sociocultural approach will be described by using Michel Foucault's Sexuality and Power Theory, since this theory can give a brief explanation about the reason behind Genji's affairs with his ladies. By using these approaches, the writer hopes the reader will get a better description about the life of Japanese court members during the Heian Age, which is reflected by Hikaru Genji's behavior.

A. Intrinsic Approach

In a novel, setting has a very important role in explaining about the place and the time where the story takes place. We can also figure out the main character's mood, attention, and emotions based on the setting. Most of the setting in *The Tale of Genji* took place in the court neighborhood as the central place in the novel. Only a few of the places took out of the court, such as the Rokujo mansion.

The choosing of the court as the main setting has a strong relationship with Lady Murasaki's background. As a teacher of the imperial, she knows the court neighborhood very well. One of the most outstanding events when she lived in the



court was the picture contest between two ladies in order to attract the emperor. She described this event in her novel clearly by writing it in one of the chapter, "The royal seat was put out in the ladies withdrawing rooms, and the ladies were ranged to the north and south. The seats of the courtiers faced them on the west. The paintings of the left were in boxes of red sandalwood stands with flaring legs," (328).

During her life in the court, Lady Murasaki had observed its condition and every detail in the court, including the court members' behavior. She could explain the court condition in her novel very well. Besides being related to Lady Murasaki's background, the court is chosen as the main setting since this novel tells about the court members' life style. Therefore, in order to convince the reader about the events of the story, the author gave a brief description of the court condition. The choosing of the court also has a strong relationship with the content of the story, which tells about the life of Genji. By using this setting, the author could describe about Genji's habits and his desire of something.

As a *Hikaru* (Prince), Genji spends his entire life in the court. This place also shapes his character and opinions about something, which is different with the common people's. Genji's will to power also grows in this place, since he accepts the different treatment between him and the crown prince. The court condition that is full of competition makes Genji's will to power grows. When he realizes that there is no absolute truth – the truth depends on what the Tei's says –, he tries very hard to gain more power. Power is very important for him, since he cannot inherit the crown. Genji's main reason of his will to power is he wants to

strengthen his position in the court, since his mother is just a minor consort. Therefore, the more he gains his power, the safer his position in the court will be.

The other setting takes place in the Rokujo mansion, a mansion that Genji builds for his ladies:

Genji had been thinking that he needed more room of the leisurely life, which was now his. ... He had bought four parks in Rokujo, near the eastern limits of the city and including the lands of the Rokujo lady. ... The new Rokujo mansion was finished in the Eight Month, people began moving in. The southwest quarter, including her mother's land, was assigned to Akikonomu as her home away from the palace. The northeast quarter was assigned to the lady of Orange Blossom, who had occupied the east lodge at Nijo, and the northwest quarter to the lady from Akashi. Murasaki got the rest. (403-404)

The building of the mansion is used to emphasize Genji's authority. Even though he cannot inherit the crown, by building this mansion, he can still win the public's attention. Thus, he can still keep his power in the society.

Another reason of the Rokujo mansion building is because Genji wants to strengthen his influence toward his ladies and controls them. By putting them in one place, he can control his ladies easily. Here, the Rokujo mansion becomes a symbol of Genji's power that he wants to show to the other court members and to the public. The choosing of the court and the Rokujo mansion as the setting were related to the aristocratic life style, which colors the life in the Heian age.

The competition in the court has shaped Genji's character into an ambitious man. His position as the court member and a general of the imperial gives him chances to fulfill his ambitions. He becomes a man who looks at a woman as an advantage that he can take from her. His personality is shaped for years, and it has turned him into an ambitious man despite his kindness and his affection to other people.

As a court member, Genji's personality is shaped by the competition between the court members and the different treatment between him and the crown prince, "With the birth of the son, it became yet clearer that she was the emperor's favorite. The mother of the eldest son began to feel uneasy. If she did not manage carefully, she might see the new son designated the crown prince," (8). It is obvious that Genji's competition with the crown prince has begun since he was a baby. The competition that occurred among the court members has taught Genji to gain more power. He also learns that the way to gain power is not only legally but also illegally. His affair with the Rokujo lady – the widow of the late crown prince – becomes the fastest way to reach his goals in gaining the power he desires. This affair happens since Genji needs a legitimation from the court members that he also belongs to the main court society. His mother's background made him a commoner (= Genji) among the other court members. Thus, by having an affair with the Rokujo lady, he would like to emphasize his existence.

As a general of the imperial, Genji's desire to gain more power outside the court is done by having many affairs. By doing these, he tries to show his power

to the public. He sees these women as a tool to reach his goals in broadening his authority. Thus, he supposes them as toys that he can show to other people, "A clever and watchful woman can create all manner of difficulties. ... Murasaki was the perfect companion, a toy for him to play with," (117-118). However, Genji still loves his ladies and gives his affection to them. It shows that behind his ambitions, he is still a compassionate man.

The most important part of Genji's character is his confession of his affairs to his ladies, except for Fujitsubo and Utsusemi. In order to gain more power in front of the public, he has to admit his affairs to them. This confession is very important since this activity is related to the Japanese culture during the Heian Age. According to this culture, only people who come from a high social rank and belong to the aristocrat group can have many ladies in their life. Therefore, in order to gain public confession of his authority toward them, Genji admits his affairs with his ladies. Later, he even legalizes it by building the Rokujo mansion to accommodate his ladies.

Lady Shikibu viewed the court members' habit very differently from the common people's. They live in extravagant lifestyle and pleasure, while other people live in sorrowful conditions. This made the common people call the court members as 'the untouchable' because of their authority. In order to give a brief and further explanation of the court member's life to the common people, she wrote *The Tale of Genji*. She hoped by writing this novel, the common people would know about the other side of the court member. They would then realize

that they were just ordinary human who had their dark side, just like other people did.

Hikaru Genji's daily life can be viewed as the representation of the life of the court members. The court members, for instance, also have many ladies, compete with each other in order to gain higher position in the court, and using their sexuality to gain the power, as described in *The Tale of Genji*. For Genji, having many ladies could establish his authority in the society. As other court member, he is also expert in playing the *koto*, making a poem to express his feeling, and manages people to do what he says. These things are the qualification, which only the court members master.

The story begins with Genji's birth. His name means a "commoner", since his mother is the minor consort of the Tei. His status makes him get different treatment from the other court members. After he married, Genji begins to learn about the will to power. He learns it from his father-in-law, the Minister of the Left and the other court members. Since that time, Genji realizes that power not only can be obtained from the 'legal' way, but also from the 'illegal' way. One of this ways is by having many ladies .

Genji has his first affair with Utsusemi, the Governor of Iyo's wife, "At Sanjo once more, he was unable to sleep. If the thought that they would not meet again o pained him, what must it do to the lady? She was no beauty, but she had seemed pretty and cultivated. 'Of the middling rank,' he said to himself," (49). This affair helps Genji to spread his influence outside the court neighborhood. His

other affairs with the Rokujo lady and Fujitsubo enable him to emphasize his existence in the main court society, since these women belong to it.

As a result, Genji can gain a higher position in the court. Realizing that he can gain more power from his affairs, Genji intends to broaden his influence outside the court with the same way. When Genji suffers from the second attack of malaria, he goes to Mount Hiei to be cured. In this place, he meets Murasaki. Knowing that Murasaki will grow as a perfect woman, Genji wants to bring her to the court as his new lady. Beside this reason, Genji also believes that bringing Murasaki to the court will broaden his influence toward the common people. He insists to bring her without regarding Murasaki's family's objection, "What I am about to say will, I fear-startle you- but might I have change of the child? I have rather good reasons, for all the suddenness of my proposal. If you are telling yourself that she is too young – well, Sir, you are doing me injustice. Other man may have improper motives, but I do not'," (96).

His intention to bring Murasaki to the court shows that he is an ambitious man. His desire to show his authority pushes him to have many ladies. Thus, when he meets the Akashi lady, his will to power grows. As a daughter of a retired Akashi governor, she and her family have a quite strong influence toward their people. By having her as one of his ladies, Genji would also gain the power toward the Akashi people. It makes Genji very happy, since he knows that his power outside the court has been admitted, "In any event, he felt a clean happiness sweep over him. A beginning has been made," (269). With this affair, Genji's power and popularity not only occurs in the court and capital city (Nijo) area, but

also in the outside of the court. It convinces him that his influence has broadened as he always wishes to.

Genji's opportunity to gain power happens when the Reizei Emperor, his son from Fujitsubo was born. Unfortunately, he cannot gain the power he wants since his son is recognized as the Tei's son. When the Suzaku Emperor resigns, the Reizei Emperor reigns to replace him. After the Reizei Emperor reigns, he finds out his birth secret, that he is Genji's son instead of the Tei's. From here, Genji's opportunity to gain more power in the court is opened. In order to honor his father, Genji, the Reizei Emperor promotes him to the higher rank, as the chancellor of the imperial.

Genji's promotion as a chancellor is a reflection of the Reizei's honor to him. It is also used as a payment of the bad treatment of the Old Tei toward Genji, "His reputed father, the old emperor, had been badly served, and his emperor was serving his real father badly by letting toil as a common minister," (357). His promotion as a chancellor opens Genji's opportunity to gain more power in the court. Being a father of the Emperor makes Genji's position in the court raised. Genji can establish himself as the main court society as he always dream off. Therefore, Genji's will to power comes true through a very smooth way, his sexual activities (his affairs).

B. The Relations between Sexuality and Power

During his life, a person cannot avoid his sexual activities. Whether he does it with his wife or with other women, this activity shows that a sexual

intercourse has become a part of human's life. *The Tale of Genji* tells about the life of Hikaru Genji with his ladies during his life in the Heian Age. The sexual intercourse and will to power become the main reasons of having these affairs, both for Genji and for the ladies.

Genji's first sexual relationship happens when he married Aoi at the age of twelve, "and now they had Genji for a son-in-law," (22). For this reason, the marriage does not run well. The Minister of the Left, Aoi's father, wants to strengthen his position in the court by having Genji as his son-in-law. In this case, Foucault's 'will to power' becomes the main reason of Genji's marriage. When someone wants to reach a higher rank, he will do anything to reach his goals, even though he has to sacrifice his family. This also happens to the Minister of the Left. When he marries his daughter to Genji without asking for her consent, he has sacrificed her for his own interest. His ambition to strengthen his position in the court has defeated his love to his own daughter. His new position as the Tei's family is more important than his daughter's happiness.

The will to power also becomes the reason when Genji has some affairs with his ladies. During his life, Genji has to maintain the social status which supports him to have his affairs; his position as court member (a noble) and as a general of the imperial. Beside this position, his good looking and his brightness also become a reason of his affairs.

1. Genji as a Court Member (a Noble)

Genji begins his affair with Fujitsubo when he is still a teenager. He has a son from this affair, “there was no doubt that the child bore a marked, indeed a rather wonderful resemblance to Genji, and not the Emperor,” (146). Fujitsubo’s position as the Tei’s youngest minor consort puts her into a weak position among the other ladies. Therefore, having a son – Genji’s son – who is recognized as the Tei’s son can strengthen her position in the court. She can fulfill her ambition by bearing a son for the Tei, even though the baby is not the Tei’s son. Here, Fujitsubo uses her affair with Genji to gain more power in the court.

On the other hand, Genji uses this affair to take ‘revenge’ to his father, the old Tei. Genji’s position as a son of a minor consort has caused him get different treatment from the crown prince, even though the Tei tries to reduce it. “Determined that the ceremony should be in no way inferior to the crown prince’s, which had been held some years earlier in the Grand Hall, the emperor himself bustled about adding new details to the established forms,” (20-21). This different treatment has made Genji want to take ‘revenge’ to the court member. By placing his son as the Tei’s son, he has reached his aim to gain the same power with the crown prince. When his son, the Reizei Emperor, reigns as the next Emperor, Genji has gained his goal to get the power indirectly.

Genji’s good looking and his position as a court member makes him get any woman he wants, including other man’s wife. Utsusemi, the wife of the Governor Kii, agrees to have an affair with him after she knows that he is a court member, even though she never knows about Genji’s real identity. For her, this

affair is a kind of intermezzo of her boring marriage, “She was thinking of her husband, whom the most part she considered a clown and a dolt,” (49). However, she is still loyal to her husband. Her real aim of this affair is getting a higher position for her husband, which can raise her position in the society.

Genji’s position as the Tei’s son has been a strong appeal for many women to have affairs with him, whether they are single or married. They do not do this affair for free. They have their affairs with Genji to gain more power in the society by recognizing themselves as the court member’s ladies or gaining a higher job position for their husbands. Their ambitions have created a conducive condition for having such affairs, whether they create their affairs intentionally or not. For Genji, these affairs can also strengthen his position, since Fujitsubo bears his son; and in the society having many ladies, is recognized as the symbol of wealth during the Heian Age.

The author’s position as the teacher in the court neighborhood enables her to describe Genji’s and his ladies real purposes of having their affairs. Her interactions with the court members made her possible to understand their hope and their dreams, even though they never said it explicitly. The conditions in the court permit the competition between its members (including the ladies) made them compete to gain a higher position. Some of these ladies took the fast way, just like Fujitsubo and Utsusemi. As a teacher of the Empress Akiko (the Emperor’s consort), Lady Murasaki could observe the behavior of the court members freely. Therefore, she understood Genji’s and his ladies’ ambition very well. This condition made her agree that the competition between the court

members had been practiced for centuries and had been a part of the court members' life.

Genji has an affair with the Rokujo lady because she belongs to the main court society. She is the widow of the former crown prince, Genji's uncle, "As for the affair at Rokujo, he had overcome the lady's resistance and had his way, and alas, he had cooled toward her," (66). With his status as a "commoner" in the court, Genji always has a dream to be a part of the main court society.

By having an affair with the Rokujo lady, Genji – in his teenager's mind – hopes that he will be accepted as one of the main court members. Therefore, he wants to ease the different treatment between him and the other court members, especially the crown prince. As it always happens during the Heian Age, the treatment of the crown prince and the son of the minor consort are always different. The differentiation happens almost in every side of their life, such as their royal status, the classification of the court member, and their rights. This differentiation makes Genji, as a son of the minor consort, always be the 'second class' of the court members.

On the other hand, for lady Rokujo who is seven years older than Genji, this affair can ease her loneliness after her husband's death. Genji can also be a father figure of her children. Yet, his presents is very important for them both, and becomes as a kind of gift for them, "Yes, thought the children, who had been silently reproaching their mother for her want of control, the fate had been kind to her," (63). This condition makes the Rokujo lady loves him very much and makes her dependent on him too much.

Another reason for the Rokujo lady of having an affair with Genji is she needs to secure her position in the court after her husband's death, which is not as strong as it was. Thus, if she let this condition happens, it will threat her position. She becomes afraid the people will forget her. In other words, her position becomes weak, which will be getting worse if she does not find someone who can secure his position.

Her choosing person is Genji, since she realizes that he will be a great man in the future, "People began calling Genji 'the shining one'," (20). Her prediction comes true when Genji becomes the general of the imperial. After her affair with Genji for a while, she falls in love with him. It causes her jealousy when she finds out that Genji has another lady, named Yugao, "You do not even think of visiting me, when you are so much on my mind. Instead you are go running off with someone who has nothing to recommend her, and raise a great stir over her. It is cruel, intolerable'," (75).

In her jealousy, she sends her wandering spirit to Yugao, which kills her, Unfortunately, Genji finds it out, "Something very strange has happened," he said after a time, "'strange', unbelievable, would not be too strong a word. I wanted a priest – one does when these things happen – and asked you reverend brother to come'," (978). Deep in her heart, the Rokujo lady wants to own Genji for herself. Here, her will to power is applied by owning Genji for herself without wanting to share him to other ladies.

Her will to power causes her to have a tight competition with Aoi, Genji's wife. These two women want to show who has the bigger chance to win Genji's

attention. As Genji's wife, Aoi has the bigger opportunity. Therefore, it makes the Rokujo lady jealous. Their competition comes to the point of culmination when Aoi defeated her in the Kamo Festivals:

Genji seemed indifferent to all the grandly decorated carriages and all the grey sleeves, such as flood of them that it was if ladies were stacked in layers behind the carriage curtains. Now and again, however, he would have a smile and a glance he recognized. His face was solemn and respectful as he passed his wife's carriage. His men bowed deeply, and the Rokujo lady was in misery. She had been utterly defeated (170).

Realizing that she will never own Genji completely, the Rokujo lady once again sends her spirit. This time to Aoi. As the result, Aoi dies because of her wandering spirit. Unfortunately, the Rokujo lady's dream to own Genji never comes true, since Genji turns his attention to Murasaki. In this case, the Rokujo lady's will to power has led her to do crimes to other ladies.

2. Genji as a General of the Imperial

After his marriage, Genji joins the military corps. Here, his career rises quickly, and he becomes a general of the imperial. His position makes him gain a great power in the court and in the society. As a result, it makes him easy to get the women he wants as his ladies. One of these ladies is Murasaki (later known as his favorite lady). He takes her as his lady when she is still 10 years old, with the objection of her family;

'Do you have to keep hiding yourself from me? Come here. You can sleep on my knee.'

'She is really young, Sir.' However, Shonagon urged the child forward, and she knelt obediently just inside the blind. ... He slipped after her. 'I am the one you must look now. You must not be shy with me.' (110)

From the statements above, it is clear that even though Murasaki's servant (Shonagon) objects Genji's desire, she still gives Murasaki to him. In this case, Genji uses his power as a general to force Murasaki's family to accept his desire on Murasaki.

On the other hand, Murasaki's family has no courage to fight him. As other Japanese people in the Heian Age, the court members' will is an order that has to be obeyed and carried out. Beside a court member, Genji is also a general of the imperial, which gains a very great power in the society. Thus, even though they do not agree with him, their loyalty and devotion defeat their objection. When Genji insists to bring Murasaki to the court, they have to agree his decision, which means they admit his authority toward them.

For Murasaki herself, living with Genji means she will have a better life. In other words, she will gain more power than if she still lives in the mountain. Her will to power becomes stronger after the death of Aoi. She replaces Aoi's place besides Genji, and begins to take over the things that belongs to Aoi's responsible. Here, her desire turns her into an ambitious woman. She wants to gain a bigger power by controlling the mansion. Her ambition to be Genji's favorite lady comes true after she uses her beauty and her brightness to attract

Genji. For Murasaki, her beauty is just a tool to reach her dream to be one of the court members. Therefore, she uses her beauty and her sexual appeal to gain the position she wants.

Genji begins his affair with the Akashi lady after his boat sunk near the Akashi Island. Being recognized as a general of the imperial, Genji is treated well by the retired Akashi governor, the Akashi lady's father. For this family, Genji's position is very high, and beyond their imagination, especially for the Akashi lady, "As for the daughter, she rarely saw a passable man here in the country among people of her own rank; and now she had had a glimpse of a man the like of whom she had not suspected to exist. She was a shy, modest girl, and she thought him quite beyond her reach," (265).

When Genji wants the Akashi lady as his new one, the woman feels that it makes her dreams have come true. Genji's offering gives her a chance to raise her social rank in the society. Thus, she takes it to better her future life. For her, Genji's main appeal is his good-looking face and his status as a general (his social rank).

The Akashi lady's desire to gain a higher social rank comes true after Genji brings her into the Rokujo mansion. Living in the Rokujo mansion that is placed in the court neighborhood, naturally raises her social rank. However, she still wants to strengthen her position, which is supported by the birth of Genji's daughter. Genji's affection turns to her after the baby was born, which secure her position beside Genji and her future in the court.

Meanwhile, Genji's affair with the Akashi lady broadens his authority outside the court area. As a great general who is already well known in the capital city, it is very important for him to keep or even broaden his power in front of the public. By having the governor's daughter as one of his ladies, he can enlarge the public's support for him. This support is very important, since Genji wants to raise his position in the court. If he can collect many supports from the public, it will be a good point for him to gain a higher position. Therefore, for Genji, his affair with the Akashi lady gives him a big influence in broadening his authority outside the court area.

Even though Genji has many ladies, not all of them are beautiful. One of these minority women is the Safflower Princess. She is described as the long red nose woman who is not attractive :

Not at all promising – and the nose! The nose how dominated the scene. It was like that of the beast on which Samantabhadra rides, long, pendulous, and red. A frightful nose. The skin was whiter than snow, a touch bluish even. The forehead bulged and the line over the cheeks suggested that the full face would be very long indeed. (131)

With her physical condition, the Safflower Princess realizes that her affair with Genji is a gift for her. She adores Genji for this, and makes her will to power lesser than the other ladies. However, as any woman, she uses this affair to gain a higher social rank and raises her popularity in the society. The difference is that she uses Genji's sympathy rather than his love to gain his attention on her. The

Safflower Princess can fulfill her will to power by having an affair with Hikaru Genji.

However, Genji gets the advantage more than the Safflower Princess does from this affair. He can give a good impression in front of the public. In other words, Genji can obtain his power not only from a formal way, but he can also obtain it from the informal way. In the formal way, he can gain his authority by using his power as a general. In the informal way, he can win the public attention by having an affair with an unattractive woman. The public will give their sympathy since they think that he is a very kindhearted man, with all his glory, he still wants to treat and give his love and attention to an unattractive woman.

During his life, as a noble and as a general, Genji gets his power mostly from his affairs. Some of his ladies would like to become his ladies since they know that he is one of the court members. His position as one of the court members (as a noble) has secured his life and a high social rank in the society. Thus, these women, especially those coming from the common people, want to be a part of the court society. Meanwhile, some of his other ladies would like to become his ladies since they know that he is a general of the imperial, a very prestigious position in the society. Being his ladies can raise their prestige and their social rank in the society. In other words, these women can enlarge their power with their status as Hikaru Genji's ladies.

Genji gets his greatest power when the Reizei Emperor, his son from Fujitsubo, reigns. After knowing that he is Genji's son, the Reizei emperor promotes him to a higher position in the court as a chancellor. Deep in his heart,

the Reizei Emperor wants to restore him as a royal. Unfortunately, Genji's background as a son of a minor consort will not let him to have royal status, "The emperor would have liked to go little further and restore him to royal status, but Genji's inclinations were against that honor as well," (359).

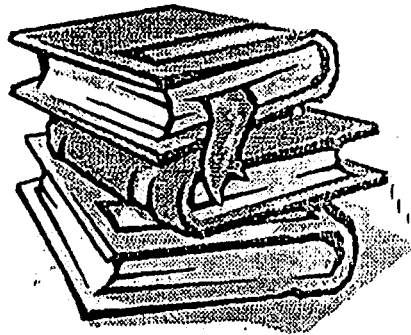
The reigns of the Reizei Emperor gives Genji the opportunity to enlarge his power in two different ways. Explicitly, he gains a very high social rank after he holds his position as a chancellor. Implicitly, he can inherit the crown through his son's hand, even though the public never knows Reizei's real identity as Genji's son. With this scheme, Genji can emphasize his power in the court innovatively and through a very subtle way. In other words, Genji can use his sexual authority to rule the country, even though indirectly.

According to Michel Foucault's theory, the power systems control the sexual activities. In *The Tale of Genji*, Hikaru Genji uses his position as the court member and as a general of the imperial to get the ladies he wants. From these activities, he realizes that the sexual activities have a different meaning. He learns that a sexual activity can be used to gain the power he wants. As a court member who has learnt about affairs since he is very young, Genji thinks that everything he does is a normal think.

Genji's purpose to gain his real power comes true when his son, the Reizei Emperor reigns. On the other hand, the competition between his ladies had caused some victims, including his wife. The main reason of this competition is every lady wants to be his favorite lady, if they cannot be his wives. The Rokujo lady has the biggest will to power since she is the widow of the late former crown

prince. She becomes very jealous to Aoi, whom she thinks has gained the greatest power among Genji's ladies.

Unfortunately, not every Genji's will to power can come true. Even though his son has reigned as the next Emperor, he still cannot gain the royal status. His highest position is a chancellor, the highest position a 'commoner' can gain. However, Genji thinks that this position is worth enough for him, since with this position he can 'beat' the other court members position. On the other hand, the Rokujo will to power has led her to be a villain. In the end of her life, she lost everything after Genji ignores and hates her of killing his wife. For the Rokujo lady, her uncontrolled desire never gives her any peace, it even gives her sorrow in the end of her life.



CHAPTER V