

# Sample article review on reading response #3: summarizing diary of lady murasaki

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The passage from Murasaki Shikibu's *Diary*, detailed in Haruo Shirane's book *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology*, is about her trials and tribulations as a court lady-in-waiting to the Empress Shoshi. In her diary, Lady Murasaki reflects on how her behaviour is governed by what others think of her, and her growing disenchantment with and detachment from the world around her. With vivid examples from her daily life, the lady talks about how others perceive her and vice versa, about her internal struggles and melancholy and about salvation. For instance, by quoting words of other ladies in court, she talks about the striking difference between rumours spread in court about her personality and the actual one. She has been the object of much attention and criticism due to her work *The Tale of Genji*, earning the nickname Lady Chronicle for "flaunting her learning". However, when she actually meets people, she not only keeps her thoughts to herself and remains meek, but also ensures that no one discovers her ability to read and write Chinese. She is also quite judgemental about those around her, and firmly believes that pride goes before a fall, especially for those ladies who deliberately draw attention to themselves. Sei Shōnagon is a case in point here.

Even though Murasaki has remained meek outwardly - refusing to play music for fear of "adding to the sadness of it all" and denying herself the pleasure of Chinese books because of superstitions of misery attached to it - she is quickly growing weary of this. She wonders about the judiciousness of silence, and seriously considers taking up vows as a nun. She is haunted by her past as she ends this part of her diary with a yearning to achieve salvation, and a desire to be atoned of her past sins.