

## Lecture 09

### The Aesthetics of Social Relationships

#### 0. Intro

- How to succeed in Heian court society among the “good people”
- Female-male relations

#### 1. Decline in prestige of official (chinese) education

- a. posts inherited, therefore no incentive
- b. specialization in certain fields held by families led to private academies
- c. fewer envoys to continent
- d. focus on foreign lang. and patterns of expression considered dead
- e. aristocrats view academics as didactic and absurd

#### 2. Rise in the rule of taste (vs rule of law)

- a. The fine art of discernment (*sadame*)
- b. Beauty as basis for social behavior & social/moral virtue (image is everything)
- c. Things ruled by taste and beauty

#### 3. The aesthetics of sex and love

- a. The scope of male-female relations (promiscuity and restraint)
- b. Tasteful courtship
- c. The form and content of physical sex

Is the Tale of Genji nothing more than a Heian version of a daytime soap opera?

Why or why not?