



HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

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SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

**A Reading of Chikamatsu's “*Daikyoji Mukashigoyomi*
(The Old Almanac)”:
Japanese Social Structures around the time
of the *Jokyo* Calendar Reform**

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In the first half of the early-modern era, Japan experienced great changes following the establishment of the *Tokugawa* shogunate system. As if to symbolize these changes, a major reform in the calendar took place in the first year of *Jokyo* (1684), a reform of such scale being the first in over eight hundred years. This treatise aims to clarify the social structures and their changes around that time, by analyzing Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724)'s *Joruri* (traditional puppet theatre script) titled “*Daikyoji Mukashigoyomi* (The Old Almanac)”, which is based on an actual incident of adultery that happened in the household of a publisher of almanacs in the year before the *Jokyo* calendar reform.

The first chapter begins by describing the outline of the text, and goes on to highlight its distinctive features through comparison with the historical records and other literary works based on the same incident. As it becomes clear that Chikamatsu depicted the incident and its circumstances quite differently from other texts, the second chapter conducts a thorough

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examination of the incident's background, especially the issues concerning the *Jokyo* calendar reform. The third chapter then reconstructs Chikamatsu's perception of these actual events and issues surrounding them, and how his attitude toward them is reflected in the text.

Through these analyses, it is made clear that Chikamatsu radically changed the factual details in his text, and that this refusal to merely describe the actual incident involved an attempt to represent what he saw as important issues in the social structures of the time. Far from being a neutral representation of these social structures, the *joruri* represents Chikamatsu's strong resistance against a system which could allow an individual to be destroyed through the exercise of impenetrable and complicated governmental power on the pretext of trivial faults.