

This thesis deals with the theme of love and the aesthetic ideal of perfect lover in tales with poems (monogatari) from the middle of the Heian period (794-1185). Firstly it pursues the historical and social conditions that influenced the genesis of these works. Special attention is given to the marriage institution and the nature of love in this period. Afterwards the author included an analysis of the theme of love poetry in the first imperial anthology of Japanese poetry (Kokin Wakashū) and its love discourse. The thesis deals also with the basic aesthetic ideals of the Heian period and tries to investigate their authentic meaning in the context of classical Japanese literature. However, the main concern of this thesis is the analysis of Ise monogatari (Tales of Ise). It deals with the problems of the genesis, date, authorship and the meaning of its title, as well as the construction of the work. Then comes the study of Ariwara no Narihira, the historical figure, who is probably the protagonist of this literary text, and the author also deals with the problems concerning the interpretation of this character in the context of the middle age commentaries of Ise monogatari. In the last chapter of the thesis the author shows the way the theme of love and the aesthetic ideal of perfect lover developed in other tales that followed the completion of Ise monogatari. The author of the thesis tries to give this way the evidence that Ise monogatari is probably the basic text (master narrative) of Japanese literature.