

Kumashiro: Who she is, and Why Tenchi loves her:

Part 3

An Editorial by Robert Alderson



Why Sakuya Is the Best Woman for Tenchi

This statement can certainly be considered one of the more controversial subjects within all of the Tenchi Muyo forums I've ever been to. Again, why is this...? Is it because Sakuya is truly a horrid individual not worthy of putting forth the effort of loving...? The answer is...no. No one truly knows...perhaps it's because her hair is too short, maybe it's because she doesn't possess any super powers like any of the other girls, maybe they have an issue with her being a whole head shorter than Tenchi...whatever the case, the fact still remains that Sakuya Kumashiro is perhaps one of the kindest individuals within this series, and Tenchi Masaki eventually wound up falling in love with **her** because of that. I've already highlighted several events that've led Tenchi to fall in love with her, but one point I haven't mentioned, which may be one of the most important yet, is that Sakuya truly loved him with all her heart. This is evidenced in the fact that she was not only willing to give up her life for him, but she actually *did* do it for him. Let's sit back and think about that for a while. That means, no matter what anyone may think about her, whatever she was or may have been; it was **her** that saved his life...and in the end, **her** that rescued everyone. Most people don't realize this, but Yugi in essence, had already **won**. All Sakuya had to do was keep him there in Yugi's dream-world with her forever (which he was certainly willing to do). But she didn't do that...she defied her master (and to a certain extent Tenchi's wishes) and risked her own existence to rip Yugi's sound victory away from her hands to give it back to Tenchi. She freed Tenchi, allowing him to eventually defeat Yugi. To put it simply, if it weren't for her (Sakuya), Yugi would've **won**, most everyone in the universe would've been preemptively killed, and the world would've been made over in Yugi's own distinctive image. And if that ever became the case, neither Ryoko, nor Ayeka would've had *any* chance of being with him...ever.

That's a pretty sobering thought considering Yugi created Sakuya for the sole purpose of driving a wedge between Tenchi and the other girls who were now a part of the Masaki extended family, but that's exactly what happened. Sakuya helped in her own unique way, to save the world.

Yugi had the foresight to create an elaborate plan involving Sakuya separating Tenchi from the other girls, by pulling at his heartstrings. However, what she didn't plan on was Sakuya actually developing her own sense of self-awareness and falling in love with Tenchi for *real*.

How do we know she loved him for real? To answer that question we must first examine what we know of Yugi's plan to destroy the Masaki household.

We initially met Yugi in the first episode of the series in a few glimpses as she was concocting a nefarious plan that would destroy Tenchi and his grandfather Katsuhito by resurrecting the spirits

of greed so that they could attack them while they performed various rituals. Meanwhile, though we didn't know it at the time, we have been systematically fed images of Sakuya, as she was busy spending time with, and hanging out with her friends throughout the day. This is important to note because, as I've mentioned earlier, Yugi had created Sakuya early enough so that she could intermingle with the local people and get firmly established within the school before Tenchi's arrival there.

When she initially created Sakuya, she did so with the strict intent of setting a hedge between Tenchi and the girls. Now that I think about it, I believe that Yugi intended to get Tenchi to fall in love with Sakuya by somehow mimicking the already established relationships between him and the other girls. However, as Sakuya mingled with friends of her own, she somehow developed a unique personality of her own. Hence, though she intended for Sakuya to *imitate* falling in love with him, in much the same way that Hotsuma did with Ryoko; Sakuya unbeknownst to her, wound up falling in love with him for *real*...and therein is where the problem lies...as regards to Yugi.

Sakuya was not meant to truly fall in love with the personable young man known as Tenchi Masaki. She was only meant to get *him* to fall in love with *her*. How can I make this assumption? As I watch the show more and more, it becomes apparent to me, that as Yugi observed Sakuya's actions, as puzzling as they were to her, she realized that Sakuya would be more convincing to him if she actually *did* truly love him, so even though she may not have agreed with a lot of things that Sakuya did, she allowed it to transpire because it would only help her out that much more in her master plan in the long-run.

Proof that Sakuya broke free from her initial design was in dozens of little actions that she's made that totally confused Yugi, such as when Sakuya took up photography because it was something that she "*really wanted to do*". I also recall an instance when Tenchi asked her to come in and have some tea at his house after she dropped off some food, after which she promptly turned him down. This clearly illustrates her true feelings for him. She cared enough about him to know when *not* to intrude in on his personal time. Someone hell-bent on destroying someone else couldn't care less whether they needed personal time to themselves or not.

Wait a minute...she cared enough about him to know when *not* to intrude in on his personal time? Didn't Ryoko do the same thing after episode 10 (big-date) when Ayeka wanted to spy on Tenchi and wound up meeting the motorcycle comet couple, (Ep.14 // Isao Ketauchi and Masayo Manuketa) and again when the girls all left to be with Tenchi when he was at the carnival? (beginning of Ep.16) Yes, this is true. Ryoko did go through some serious character development and growth throughout the series. However, this was only *after* Ryoko had the impression that she and Tenchi were actually an item.

One thing to remember, Sakuya was well aware of the fact that Tenchi and her were not officially boyfriend and girlfriend, and she gave him the space that he requested any way. She just hung out with him as a friend (even though you could tell it was slowly tearing her apart inside). This is a fact that Tenchi made quite clear to her at the end of episode 12, however, she took this time to instead focus on making herself a better person and strengthening her growing relationship with Tenchi. Toward the beginning of the pivotal episode 16, Sakuya even tells her two friends that they aren't together officially, a fact that they find unbelievable because they are all too aware of how Tenchi really feels for her, and likewise. Later still, when Sakuya is pouring out her heart to Tenchi on the school's roof, she tells him that she's fine just being with him at school every day.

So what does this all mean? Simple...Ryoko may very well have loved Tenchi Masaki with all her heart, but really, who's arguing that she didn't? The true argument is, whether or not Sakuya, though being composed of Yugi's shadow, had any true claims to loving Tenchi or not, and

whether he had any reason to love her back...and the answer is; given all the available proof mentioned earlier...a resounding...yes. Her love for him was real, and likewise him for her.

Sakuya the Shadow-Girl

Let's back up here for a second. I've heard many people quickly bring up the fact that Sakuya is only a shadow, and thus isn't even real for her to be having feelings for Tenchi in the first place. They immediately dismiss her at this point because of this. Even though it may (or may not) be true, what difference does it make? She obviously believes that she exists, and to a greater extent, so do Tenchi and the other girls.

Side point: At the end of the series, even though it had been implied earlier that the "world" in general would never remember that she even existed, Ryoko, Tenchi, and the others, clearly remember that she did, and Ryoko even hints that Yugi may eventually grow to become Sakuya one day when she matures.

To me, that statement **screams** that she was much **more** than just a simple shadow. If she were, would it be logical to conclude that a real-live girl would grow to become the likeness of her shadow? How does that even make any sense? How many people in the real world grow to become their shadows? I believe the term "shadow" was given to describe her symbolically-not literally. I believe she really represented a side/personality to her that she hid even from herself, a kind of a multiple personality, if you will. As a mutant perhaps one of her abilities was in her being able to take fractions of her own consciousness and generate separate bodies in order to contain them. She would be in a sense, talking to herself (and by some weird bit of logic, talking also to her shadow).

The more you think about it, the more it begins to make sense. As was stated earlier, Yugi is still just a child, even though she may be extremely advanced from the standpoint of ordinary human beings from here on earth. Its not out of the realm of plausibility that, as a little girl since she never had any **real** friends of her own to play with, (and psychosomatically having learned from her negative experiences up on Jurai, to **not** create playmates that could cause people to react in terror simply by their hideous appearance) that she would (and should) create her own imaginary friends, friends who would act out certain portions of her own personality, but were also more in line with what was physically more socially acceptable for other people to interact with around her, out of her own mental "*essence*".

As such Sakuya, Matori, and the others are more like physical *extensions* of herself, and thusly cannot be correctly placed in the category of being figments of her imagination. They are real individuals, even if they are merely fragmented pieces of her own shattered psyche.

...ouch...this is making my head hurt.

On to something a little lighter in topic...

I will now address the issue of whether or not when Ryoko tried to kiss Tenchi at the last few seconds of episode 26, proves that he loved Ryoko and not Sakuya.

What's the Deal with the Interrupted Kiss?

Recently I've read that somebody mentioned as a reason why Tenchi didn't love Sakuya, was because he almost allowed Ryoko to kiss him as they were perched atop that tree discussing Yugi and Sakuya's eventual fate.

First off, this in *no* way proves that he didn't love Sakuya...however it does prove that Tenchi is either at the beginning of being in love with, or well underway with being in love with Ryoko. This is not in dispute. You have to remember also, that Tenchi has been through a lot of personal emotional heartache fairly recently. He only recently admitted to himself that he was in love with Sakuya, and when he did, she was inexplicably torn from him and destroyed right before his very eyes.

He might've even had some form of closure in his relationship with her as well, you never know... I say this because he realized within his own heart, that he could've stayed with her forever if he simply wanted to...and by George he *did* want to...but *she* let him go, saving his life and releasing him from Yugi's powerful mind trip so that he could save the world from her. She did this at great personal cost to herself. She knew that effectively...she would die, but her love for him was great enough to see past all that. She gave her life for the man that she loved. I believe that he would've done the same for her, had he been in her position.

...But finally he did realize that he'd lost her. Unlike, when you or I break up with someone we love, we can always call that person up and...well...also there's always the chance of people getting back together. As far as Tenchi was concerned...he knew, that wasn't an option. He knew after he let her go, he was *never* going to see her again...ever. He probably set up an emotional wall to shield himself from such pain until he could gradually learn to deal with his loss.

Regarding that "almost kiss"...truthfully, we'll never know. Maybe he would've tried to stop her...maybe not. That is something only the story writers will know for sure, but keep in mind how emotionally weak he must've been at the time.

Lets put it all into perspective. Tenchi just lost his girlfriend. For all practical intents and purposes, his girlfriend *died* right before his eyes in his arms. Anyone would want to be with people that they love after a traumatic event like that...especially for moral support. And admittedly he *did* love Ryoko. People who've lost ones they love go through a period where they aren't themselves...my guess is he was going through that same thing.

So really, does that "almost kiss" prove that Tenchi didn't love Sakuya? Hardly...if anything, it goes to show how emotionally injured he was at the time over the loss of his beloved girlfriend.

In conclusion, given all the facts that I've just highlighted regarding Sakuya's feelings for Tenchi and her bubbly personality, and so forth, I hope I was able to at least get a few people to understand why it is some folks are absolutely *convinced* that Sakuya Kumashiro is the perfect woman for Tenchi in the Shin Tenchi Muyo universe. This however, obviously doesn't apply to the OAV's, that's a different story entirely, and one that may be highlighted in a different editorial in the near future.

And *that* folks, is my two cents. I hope you've enjoyed reading this writing.

...Until next time.

-Excelsior