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COMMITTEE

THE
NOH
DRAMA

TEN PLAYS
FROM THE JAPANESE

\$13.95

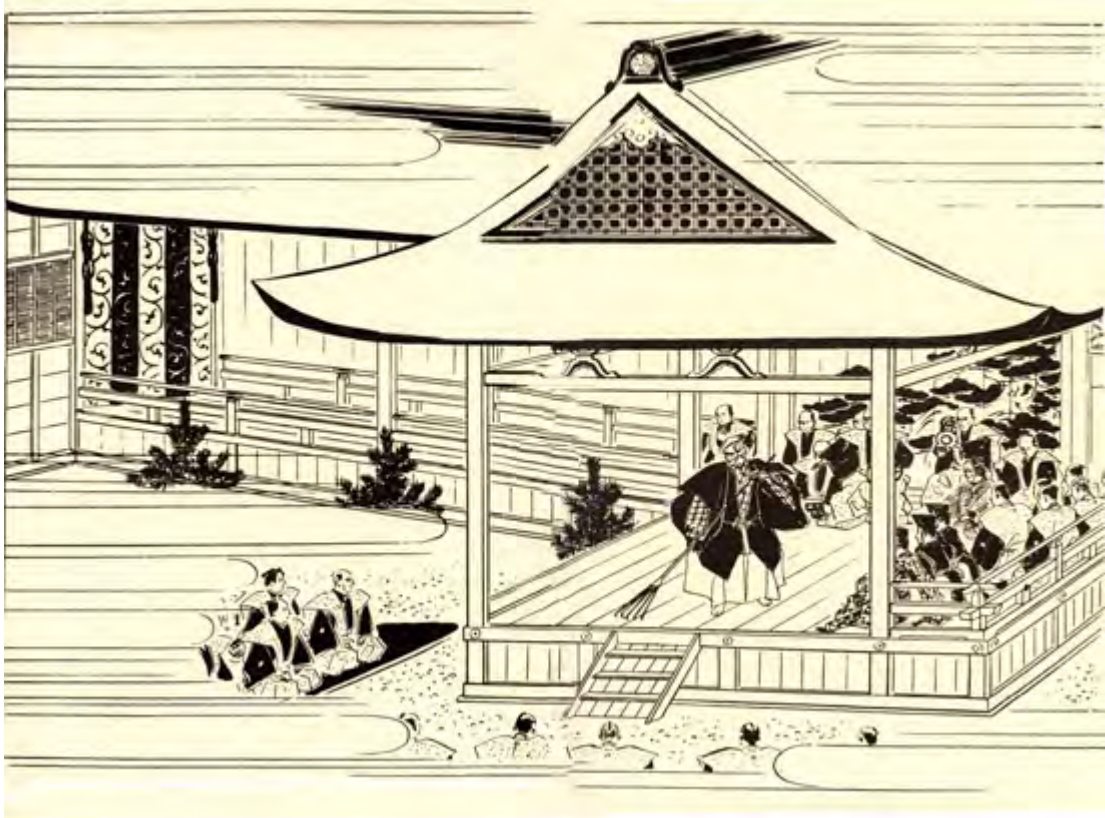
THE NOH DRAMA: Ten Plays from the Japanese

THE NOH PLAYS of Japan survive as a magnificent artistic heritage handed down from the great cultural and spiritual achievements of medieval Japan. They were created during a period of Japanese history when the lofty spiritual ideals of Buddhism were exerting their profoundest influence on Japanese society. This book contains expert renditions of ten of the most important Noh plays, preserving much of the Buddhist flavor of the originals. They can now be enjoyed for their great literary merit, besides giving the reader an understanding of a unique theater art and important insights into the cultural, spiritual, and artistic traditions of Japan.

Combining the elements of the dance, miming, music, and chants, Noh plays may be described as lyrico-dramatic tone-poems, in which the text has a function somewhat similar to that of the libretto in a Wagner or a Debussy opera. The significance of the action, the beauty of the verse, and excellence of the music and singing are designed to "open the ear" of the mind, while the miming and dancing awaken the emotions of the spectator and "open his eyes" to that supreme form of beauty which is the goal of all æsthetic expression.

Especially characteristic of Noh is a certain half-revealed or suggested beauty, at once elusive and meaningful, tinged with wistful sadness. This book of ten complete Noh plays in excellent English translations makes it possible for the Western reader to appreciate this unique literary quality, and of course it will be found invaluable by those who have the opportunity to attend an actual Noh performance.

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THE NOH DRAMA

UNESCO COLLECTION OF REPRESENT-
ATIVE WORKS: JAPANESE SERIES

THE NOH DRAMA TEN
PLAYS FROM THE
JAPANESE SELECTED AND
TRANSLATED BY THE SPECIAL
NOH COMMITTEE, JAPANESE
CLAS-SICS TRANSLATION
COMMITTEE, NIPPON
GAKUJUTSU SHINKŌKAI

CHARLES E. TUTTLE COMPANY: PUBLISHERS

RUTLAND, VERMONT

TOKYO, JAPAN

NIPPON GAKUJUTSU SHINKŌKAI

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Representatives

Continental Europe: Boxerbooks, Inc., Zurich

British Isles: PRENTICE-HALL INTERNATIONAL, INC., London

Australasia: BOOK WISE (AUSTRALIA) PTY. LTD.

104-108 Sussex Street, Sydney 2000

Published by the Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., of Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan, with editorial offices at Yaekari Building

3rd Floor, 5-4-12 Osaki Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0032
© 1955, by Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai: All rights reserved
Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 60-11007
ISBN: 978-1-4629-0456-3 (ebook)
First published in 1955 under the title *Japanese Noh Drama: Ten
Plays*
Selected and Translated from the Japanese
Eleventh printing, 1985

Printed in Japan

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The purpose of all art is to bring sweetness to the hearts of all people and to harmonize high and low.

—ZEAMI MOTOKIYO, *Kwadensho*.

PREFACE

The Japanese Classics Translation Committee appointed in 1934 by the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai* has for its object the rendering of Japanese classics into foreign languages as a means of acquainting the world with the cultural and spiritual background of Japan. The first enterprise of the Committee was the translation of the *Manyōshū* published in 1940 and reprinted in 1948.

A second enterprise undertaken by the Society is the arduous task of translating the Noh plays which was begun in 1940, soon after the completion of the *Manyōshū*. Since, as in the case of the latter, an adequate and authoritative translation requires the collaboration of a number of scholars and specialists a Special Committee was formed, consisting of eminent authorities on the subject.

The selection of plays for translation was based upon: 1) intrinsic excellence, 2) cultural and historical significance, and 3) appeal to the Western reader. Fifty plays were chosen for the purpose and rendered into modern Japanese by the Special Committee.

The paraphrases drafted by each member were then submitted to joint sessions of the two Committees for criticism and correction. It was with the aid of these paraphrases that tentative translations were made. These were then revised by English and American scholars and submitted to the Special Committee for examination and revision. The work was continued throughout World War II, although it was not possible for the Committee to meet as often as before. Matters became even worse after the war when many of the members were so engaged with other activities that they were not able to devote much time to this work. Fifty plays have already been translated, but in view of difficult publishing conditions, it has been found impracticable to bring out the whole work at one time and thirty out of the fifty were chosen for publication. The translations were repeatedly subjected to the closest scrutiny, many obscure and

difficult passages found in them requiring further research and re-translation.

Fourteen years have elapsed since the initial work was begun, and even now, the Committee is only able to offer as a first instalment ten out of the thirty plays selected.

The Committee desires to acknowledge its deep appreciation for the invaluable help given them by Professors Shigeshi Nishimura and Haxon Ishii who have been responsible for the tentative translations and, in particular, for the painstaking efforts of Professor Arundel del Re who, continuing the work of Messrs. E. H. Pickering, John Morris and Merrill Hitotsuyanagi, has thoroughly revised and is still engaged in revising the dramas selected. But for his ungrudging help the present work of translation could not have been carried through or would have remained incomplete. Thanks are also due to Mr. Sōfū Matsuno for drawing the picture of the Noh stage, to Mr. Motomasa Kanze and the Hinoki Noh Texts Publishing Co. for permission to use the pictures showing the positions of the actors which precede and accompany the texts of the Kwanze school of Noh, both drawn by Mr. Sōfū Matsuno, and to the "Grant in Aid for Publishing Research Result" of the Ministry of Education for providing the funds which made the publication of this work possible.

It is with the deepest regret that the Committee has to record the death of our eminent colleagues, Dr. Seiichi Iwano, formerly Chairman of the Committee, and of Dr. Masaharu Anesaki, as well as of Dr. Gen-yoku Kuwaki, Dr. Yoshinori Yoshizawa, Dr. Asaji Nose, and Dr. Toyoichirō Nogami, the last of whom is acknowledged as a great authority on Noh plays, and has written many important works on the subject.

SANKI ICHIKAWA
Chairman of the Japanese
Classics Translation
Committee of the Nippon
Gakujutsu Shinkōkai

Tokyo
April, 1954

Footnote

* [The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.](#)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Noh as an independent and original art form—ultimately destined to supersede the earlier *Dengaku*, *Sarugaku* and other song-dances—incorporates the most significant elements of the former and especially of the *Kusemai* (tune dance). With it a new literary form may be said to have been created. The invention of Noh is attributed to Kwannami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384), a distinguished actor and writer of *Sarugaku* and to his son Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443), who developed and refined the art under the patronage of Yoshimitsu, the third Ashikaga shogun. In addition to his dramatic activities, Zeami composed a number of works, the most important of which is called the *Kwadensho* (the Book of the Flower), or more properly, *Fūshikwadensho* (風姿花傳書) in which he explained the nature and aesthetic principles governing Noh plays, and gave detailed instructions concerning the manner of composition, acting, direction, and production of these dramas.

The term Noh used substantively to denote 'accomplishment,' 'skill,' 'talent,' derives from a verb signifying 'to be able,' 'to have the power,' 'to accomplish something,' and was early applied to actors and dancers. Zeami uses the term to designate that unique type of lyrical drama known as Noh which he subsequently defines as 'elegant imitation.' In the work mentioned above the author stresses that this form of art consists of two fundamental elements—dance and song. In composing a Noh play the poet should, therefore, be careful to select personages from the classics—mythical, legendary or historical—who can appropriately execute songs and dances. He also should always keep the lay-out of the stage in his mind's eye and take care that the action develops naturally out of and expresses the mood created by the music, thus perfectly harmonizing music and acting, singing and dancing. In the light of the above, the Noh drama may, in effect, be described also as a lyrico-dramatic tone-poem in which the text has a function somewhat similar to that of the libretto in a Wagner or Debussy opera. The significance of the

action, the beauty of the verse, and the excellence of the music and singing, according to Zeami, are purposely designed to 'open the ear' of the mind, while the miming (*monomane*) and dancing (*mai*) awaken the emotions of the spectator and 'open his eyes' to that supreme form of beauty denoted by the word *yūgen*, which is the ultimate goal and the essential element of all aesthetic expression, be it dramatic or lyrical. The term *yūgen* has no exact equivalent in English; literally it means 'obscure and dark,' but, as used by Zeami, it carries the connotation of half-revealed or suggested beauty, at once elusive and meaningful, tinged with wistful sadness. Zeami and his successors applied *yūgen* as a critical yard-stick not only to works of art but also to the physical appearance and conduct of an individual. Even an old man should, it is said, be presented like a frowning crag with flowers in its crevices.

The accompanying plan, it is hoped, will help the reader the better to visualize the lay-out of the Noh stage and to understand the stage directions accompanying these translations. The stage proper, a square platform of plain white boards, evenly grained, 19 feet 5 inches square, is raised 2 feet 7 inches above the floor of the auditorium (*kenjo*) into which it juts out on three sides. Because of this peculiarity, three fronts are distinguished in the Noh stage: that facing the centre of the auditorium, *shōmen* (front), that facing right, *waki-jōmen* (waki front)—so called because the audience is facing the *waki* when he is sitting on his seat—and that facing left, *jiura* (back of the chorus). The stage is devoid of any decoration or colour except for a large wooden panel (*kagami-ita*) at the back of the stage on which a venerable twisted pine is painted, and a brilliantly coloured curtain screening the entrance to the 'mirror room' (*kagami-no-ma*) or green room on the extreme left, at the end of the long, covered bridgeway (*hashigakari*) along which the actors approach the stage. To the right of the back stage (*atoza*), in the side-wall between the flute-player's pillar (*fue-bashira*) and the *kagami-ita*, is a small sliding door (*kirido-guchi*) only used by the chorus and stage-attendants. The stage is covered by a roof supported at each corner by four square pillars about 15 feet high. A brief flight of steps leads down from it on to a broad strip of shingle called 'white sand bar'

which skirts the base of the stage and the length of the bridgeway. This strip is designed to give the necessary perspective effect to the action taking place on the stage. The bridge-way is flanked, on the auditorium side, by three sapling pines known as 'first' (nearest the stage), 'second' and 'third' pine respectively, each of which serves to mark the position to be taken up by the actors upon their entrance or exit or when the action actually takes place on the bridgeway itself. The chorus sits in an oblong recess on the right of the stage, while the orchestra is situated up-stage—the flute on the right, by the flute-player's pillar, and the drums (large hand-drum, small hand-drum and horizontal drum) on his left. On the left of the stage, by the entrance to the bridgeway, is the *shite* pillar (*shite-bashira*) and the *shite* seat, so called because the *shite* or protagonist begins his dance from there. Behind this, at the back, is the stage-attendants' seat of whom one, called the *kōken* (looker-after), is not only in charge of the stage properties and responsible for seeing that they are laid out and ready for the actors as required, but is the *shite's* understudy and must be ready to play his part at a moment's notice. The attendants assist the players to change their costumes. Since these changes take place often at the back of the stage in full view of the audience, great quickness and deftness are required in executing them. The corresponding pillar on the right stage goes by the name of *waki* pillar (*waki-bashira*) because by it is the seat of the *waki* or deuteragonist. Opposite, on the left, is the 'eye-fixing pillar' (*metsuke-bashira*) which serves as a kind of landmark for the actors in taking up their position on the stage which otherwise would be difficult because of their masks. The action proper usually begins and terminates at the *shite* pillar where the protagonist stamps his feet twice to show the play is ended. From the above the importance of the stage lay-out and of its different parts in relation to the action becomes self-evident, no less than its function as the framework for the dance-drama, each phase of which is carefully planned in relation to the fixed stage-positions already mentioned. Hanging under the floor of the stage and the bridgeway are several reverberating jars of earthenware which, acting like a sound-board, serve the purpose of intensifying the stamp of the actor's feet. The position of the jars is indicated in the plan by dotted circles.

The principal actor is called *shite* (performer) who may have one or more attendants (*tsure*), and is supported by the *waki* (bystander) and his one or more attendants (*waki-zure*). Additionally there may be a boy's role (*kokata*) and a walk-on (*tomo*). In typical Noh plays (e.g. *Takasago*, *Tamura*, *Tōboku*), the *shite* is, in reality, the only performer, since he alone mimes and dances, the *waki* in the earlier plays being little more than a foil, although in the later ones he becomes the deuteragonist. It will be noticed that in the list of *dramatis personae* the protagonist (*shite*) appears in different guises in the first and the second part. During the interlude (*ai*)¹ designed not only to allow the actor time to change costume but to relieve the tension—the latter purpose presents some interesting analogies with Shakespearean practices—a local worthy, played by the *kyōgen* or comic actor, carries on a semi-humorous dialogue in prose in which he explains the story of the play.

The chorus, while superficially bearing some resemblance to that of Greek tragedy, takes no actual part in the drama itself and wears ordinary costume. Its primary role is that of singing the words that accompany the dances executed by the *shite*, but it also comments impersonally upon the events taking place and carries on a dialogue with the *shite* and the *waki*. It consists ordinarily of from eight to ten persons including the leader. As regards the orchestra, it should be noted that the percussion instruments mark the rhythm while the flute provides the melodic theme of the songs and dances. In the present translation the Japanese technical terms for the different types of declamation and singing to be used by the actors or the chorus are given on the left-hand margin of the text. It will be seen that the sung parts alternate with recitatifs, or passages spoken in a declamatory tone. The entrance of the principal actors is generally, though not invariably, preceded by special music which has different names and varies in character according to the kind of singing that follows.

Following the entrance music (*shidai*), the play generally opens with a *shidai* sung by the *waki* alone or in unison with his attendants (*waki-zure*) accompanied by a few notes of the flute and drum taps, subsequently repeated (*jidori*) by the chorus. It is followed by the *michi-yuki* (travel song) also executed by the *waki*. The entrance

music of the *shite*, called *issei*, is usually followed by a song of the same name executed by the *shite*. The *sashi* somewhat resembles a recitatif and precedes the songs proper (*uta*) or takes the form of a dialogue as in *Takasago*, I, 4 where it links the *kuri*, a lively piece with varying rhythms, and the *kuse* executed by the chorus except for one verse sung by the *shite*. Yet another form of song is the *rongi* (debate), roughly corresponding to the Greek 'stychomythia,' alternately intoned rather than sung by the chorus and the *shite*. The *machi-utai* (waiting song) chanted by the *waki* and the *waki-zure* to a musical accompaniment, is so called because it announces the appearance of the *shite* in the second part. The *uta* mentioned above are sung by the *shite*, the chorus or the *waki*, and are divided into *age-uta* (high-pitched singing) and *sage-uta* (low-pitched singing). The use of these forms is dictated not only by the text, but by their place in the general musical and rhythmic pattern of the play. To these should be added the *kiri* (finale) sung by the chorus at the end of the play. The spoken portions (*kotoba*) written in prose are classified into *nanori* (name-introducing) delivered by the *waki*, *mondō* (dialogue), and *katari* (narration) delivered in a somewhat monotonous rhythm (*Sanemori*, II, 4).

Dance, mime and rhythm, as already remarked, are distinguishing characteristics of the Noh drama, the ultimate purpose of which is 'significant form expressing the aristocratic beauty considered indispensable to 'elegant imitation.' The *mai* (dance), as distinct from the popular *odori*, is a slow dance-sequence that weaves a continuous intricate pattern, the rhythmic movements of which are highly stylized and accompanied by gestures and postures which preserve measure and sobriety even when the tempo becomes livelier and faster, while in the latter which varies so as to express suitably the character and mood of the personage, no attempt is made at realism. The *mai* are of two types: *kakeri* (rush-dance) (*Tamura*, II, 4) and *hataraki* (war-dance) (*Funa-Benkei*, II, 5), which represent battle scenes and in which the dancer mimes rhythmically the narrative sung by the chorus, accompanying it, in the case of *hataraki*, by startling leaps and violent movements, and the *mai* proper which, as a rule, are not sung but concentrate upon beauty of form. To the latter belong the very slow and stately *kami-*

mai (god-dance) as in *Takasago*' II, 2 and the *jo-no-mai*, a slow and elegant dance generally assigned to female spirits, such as that performed by Lady Izumi in *Tōboku*, II, 4. The *mai* are in three or five movements, each of which has its particular gestures, steps and postures. The dancer always carries a large fan brilliantly painted and decorated.

In his treatises, Zeami lays particular stress on the vital function of miming in the Noh drama, setting down detailed instructions as to its technique which he illustrates by rough drawings. In these each successive movement and posture of the actor is analyzed and worked out in relation to the character of the personage and to the aesthetic effect to be produced. As conceived by Zeami, the mime might perhaps be compared to a continuous, ever-changing series of rhythmic colour patterns woven by the actor with the aid of gorgeous costumes and masks, the ultimate purpose of which is less to please the eye than to serve as a means of creating *the yūgen* mood which is the very essence of the Noh drama.

While in earlier periods it seemed likely that the costumes tended to follow current fashions, from the Momoyama (1582-1600) to the Genroku period (1688-1703), beauty of colour, line and material rather than historical accuracy were the determining criteria, thus leading to the establishment of very elaborate aesthetic conventions still observed to-day which alone would require a separate treatise. It has been thought desirable and necessary, however, for a better appreciation of the following plays, to include in the stage directions the names and a summary description of the costumes as well as of the wigs and head-gear worn by each person.

As is well known the mask is a distinctive feature of the Noh drama. Unlike classical drama and the *commedia dell'arte*, the Noh as a rule limits the use of the mask to the principal actor and to female characters and aged people. Experts distinguish over one hundred different masks which have been divided into a number of categories, according to whether they represent divinities or supernatural beings of various kinds, animals, monsters, and men and women old or young, mad persons and so forth. They are worn with costumes of an appropriate style and colour. The masks are

painted and many of them were designed and carved by famous artists. Thus in Part Two of *Takasago* the deity of Sumiyoshi wears a 'man of *Kantan*' mask created by Tokuwaka (fourteenth century) for the purpose of portraying a typical noble youth of the Heike clan, and subsequently used for youthful deities performing dances. In Part One of *Tamura*, the *shite* wears a 'boy' mask and in Part Two, a *Heida* mask representing a vigorous man in his prime, while Kiyotsune, in the play bearing his name, wears a '*cnūjō*, (lieutenant-general) mask, also attributed to the same artist.

As appears from the individual introductions, Noh plays have been classified into: (1) *Waki* Noh or *Kami* Noh (god plays) because the hero is either a god or goddess; (2) *Shura-mono* (Asura plays) whose hero is a famous mediaeval warrior; (3) *Kazura-mono* (female-wig plays)—essentially lyrical in character—in which the protagonist is a woman, whence the name; (4) Fourth Group plays, of various types not included either in the preceding or the following classes, with several important subdivisions such as *Kyōjo-mono* (mad woman pieces), and *Genzai-mono* (living person pieces); and (5) *Kin* Noh (programme-concluding plays), auspicious plays having, as a rule, supernatural beings for their protagonists. As the name indicates, plays to be performed as the last item are chosen from this group. Each programme, in accordance with prescribed dramatic principles, should consist of: introduction (*jo*), chosen from among the *Waki* Noh group, development (*ha*), consisting of three plays one from each of Groups 2, 3 and 4, and climax (*kyū*), invariably a *Kiri* Noh, irrespective of whether three instead of the customary five plays are to be performed. The *jo-ha-kyū* principle, as it is called, is also required to be applied to each individual play and affects the style of the acting as well as the dancing and production. When, for the sake of variety, it happens that the producer deviates from the above standard pattern and chooses a *Kiri* Noh instead of a *Waki* Noh as the first piece on a programme, it is required that the tempo and production of the former should follow the principle laid down for a *jo* play. Strict adherence to these conventions, while leading to standardization, when skilfully used, gives the programme artistic unity and produces the desired *yūgen*. The Noh drama, as will be

seen in the plays here translated, is constructed in accordance with the pattern which, notwithstanding certain minor variations later introduced, was laid down by Zeami in his treatise entitled *Nōsakusho*. It is divided into two parts; the first, serving as a prelude, sets the stage for the drama that will be enacted in the second. Each of these is again divided into scenes that might, in some measure, be compared to the movements of a classical sonata. Unlike what is the case in traditional Western dramatic compositions the scenes are not primarily determined by the entrance or exit of the *dramatis personae*.

The plots of Noh plays are drawn from a variety of Japanese and foreign sources, mythical or legendary, fantastic, historical or contemporary, from the earliest times down to the Muromachi period (1392-1572); or inspired by Japanese and Chinese classical poems from the numerous early anthologies. Principal among the former sources are the *Ise Monogatari* (ninth century) and the *yamato Monogatari* (tenth century), the *Genji Monogatari* (eleventh century), the *Heike Monogatari* (thirteenth century: used for the civil wars between the Heike and Genji clans), the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* (both eighth century: used mostly in the *Waki* Noh), and the collection of Indian as well as Chinese and Japanese tales and legends known as the *Konjaku Monogatari* (twelfth century). Apart from its artistic and dramatic significance, the Noh drama, it will be readily appreciated, is of paramount historical interest inasmuch as it reflects, as no other Japanese work does, “the feelings, thoughts, beliefs, superstitions and aspirations and the moral and intellectual life” of the Japanese people during one of the stormiest periods of its history.

The style and language of the Noh drama present considerable linguistic difficulties to anyone not acquainted with classical usage, Buddhist terminology, and the immense body of ancient Chinese and Japanese verse well-known to the highly cultured society of the time, to which frequent allusion is made. In some cases these are quoted in the sung parts, and without such knowledge the significance, and even the meaning, of many passages is inevitably lost. In addition to the literary style full of stylistic affectations in which Zeami required they should be composed, a further difficulty is presented by the

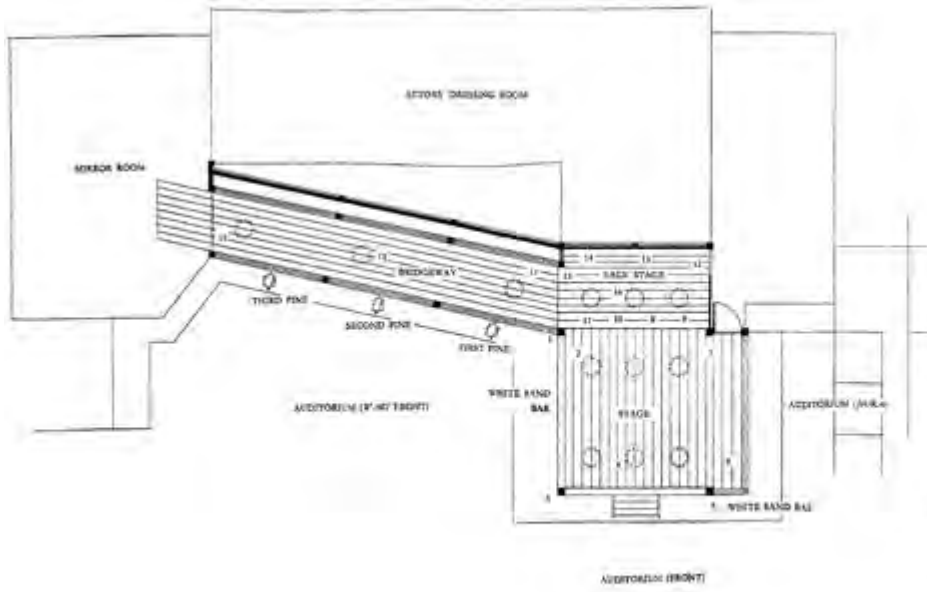
makura-kotoba (pillow-words), the *kake-kotoba* (pivot-words, i.e. words with a double meaning), the allusive use of certain words, and other conceits which defy the ingenuity of the reader and are the despair of the translator.

The repertoires of the principal Noh schools (Kwanze, Komparu, Hōshō, Kongō and Kita) list about 250 plays still being performed, some of which present slight textual variants. The production of the plays also varies to a greater or lesser extent according to the different schools. In the present volume and in those to follow, the text of the Kwanze school is generally followed. Noh play texts known as *utai-bon* (books for *utai*) are published separately or in volumes containing five pieces each but omitting stage-directions and interludes. Interlinear notes referring to the sung parts provide the user with a rough kind of musical notation, and sometimes small line drawings indicate the positions of the actors in the more important scenes.

In preparing the present translation, the first of a series of volumes, each containing ten plays, the Committee has adopted the method previously followed in the *Manyōshū*: after establishing a Japanese text based upon the most recent linguistic studies, it proceeded to make a rough English translation which was then submitted for detailed discussion and revision to a joint committee of Japanese and English scholars. No attempt has been made, however, to reproduce the complex metrical scheme of the original or to do more than present, it is hoped, a faithful yet readable translation, while at the same time preserving as far as possible something of the flavour of the original.

Footnote

¹ This interlude which forms an integral part of the drama should not be confused with satirical farces in prose of the same name, constructed in imitation of the Noh drama.



- STAGE:
- 1. FLUTE PILLAR
 - 2. XYLOPHON SEAT
 - 3. XYLOPHON PILLAR
 - 4. REVERBERATING JAR
 - 5. XYLOPHON PILLAR
 - 6. XYLOPHON SEAT
 - 7. FLUTE PLAYER'S PILLAR
- BACK STAGE:
- 8. FLUTE
 - 9. SMALL HAND-DRUM
 - 10. LARGE HAND-DRUM
 - 11. HORIZONTAL DRUM
 - 12. HORIZONTAL DOOR
 - 13. S-KANDITA PIANO
 - 14. SEAT ATTENDANTS SEAT
 - 15. XYLOPHON PILLAR
 - 16. REVERBERATING JAR
- BRIDGEWAY:
- 17. XYLOPHON SEAT
 - 18. REVERBERATING JAR
 - 19. CURTAIN

TAKASAGO



MYŌJIN "Plucking a spray of plum
I deck my hair,
CHORUS And petals, like spring snow, fall o'er my robe."
—Part II, scene 2.

INTRODUCTION

Takasago is a *kami-mai-mono* (god-dance piece) belonging to the *Waki* Noh group which consists of plays of a congratulatory nature performed, as a rule, to celebrate some auspicious occasion. *Takasago* is generally regarded as one of the best examples of this type, by reason of its theme—the legend of the twin pines of Sumiyoshi and Takasago personified by an ancient devoted couple who symbolizes longevity and conjugal fidelity.

The spirit of the Sumiyoshi Pine for countless years crossed sea and mountain to pay a nightly visit to his wife who lived on the coast of the Bay of Takasago in Harima Province, and there held happy converse until the break of day. Although now white-haired, the bond which unites the couple defies time and age, endowing them with eternal vigour and beauty.

While primarily symbolical of longevity and conjugal fidelity, the twin pines also stand for the two great repositories of Japanese poetry, the *Manyōshū*¹ and the *Kokinshū*.² According to its traditional role, poetry is one of the main instruments whereby the prosperity and continuity of the state may be ensured. In the present play the happiness and stability of Japan under the Imperial rule is, by implication, attributed to the observance of the high moral and aesthetic principles exemplified in the two anthologies.

While in Part One the aged couple personify the twin pines, in the Interlude the Man of the Place (*kyōgen*) explains that, in effect, they are temporary manifestations of the two deities of Sumiyoshi and Takasago. In Part Two, however, the deity of Sumiyoshi alone appears in his divine form.

At the beginning of the play a Shinto priest and his attendants are on their way by sea from Kyūshū to Miyako and land at the Bay of Takasago in order to visit its famous pine-tree. It is a spring evening and an aged couple are raking up the fallen needles under the pine-

tree. At the priest's request they tell him of the 'Twin Pines, and the reason why they take such care of them. Deeply moved by the tale, the priest decides to visit Sumiyoshi as well, and requests the

Man of the Place to tell him how he can get there. Having embarked on a newly-built boat, he crosses the Inland Sea to Sumiyoshi, where upon arrival he is greeted by the apparition of the noble and youthful-looking deity of the place, and witnesses his performance of a *kami-asobi* (god-play).

Takasago is a typical *Waki* Noh play except for the fact that in this particular play, the *waki* and the *tsure* are represented as a travelling priest and an old woman respectively, instead of as an Imperial messenger or courtier and as a man without a mask, as is usually the case.

When presented on very formal occasions, *Takasago*, like most *Waki* Noh plays, is preceded by *Okina*, in which case the *waki* enters very solemnly. By reason of this special order of performance-'beside' (*waki*) or after *Okina-Waki* Noh plays are so called. It may also be performed without *Okina* and is then called *Okina-nashi-noden* (presentation without *Okina*). Sometimes it is presented after the concluding piece as a *shūgen-no-shiki* (congratulatory offering) at the end of a programme, the first part being then omitted, thus shortening the play to half a Noh (*Han* Noh).

The costumes worn by the aged couple are particularly dignified to suggest the god-like nature of the two personages, and as befits the ceremonial nature of the performance.

Evidence of the popularity of the play throughout the centuries is shown by the fact that it is still customary to chant the famous lines¹ of the chorus in Part One at wedding ceremonies. The aged couple are frequently represented on *kakemono* (hanging scroll) and displayed on special occasions. Porcelain or carved figurines of them, antique as well as modern, are also quite common.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: The Preface to the *Kokinshū* contains a passage stating that the Takasago Pine and the Sumiyoshi Pine are believed to be Twin Pines, while the

apparition of the deity of the Sumiyoshi Shrine is suggested by the two poems from the *Ise Monogatari* (Tale of Ise) quoted in Part Two.

TAKASAGO

Persons

TOMONARI, PRIEST OF THE ASO SHRINE	<i>Waki</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	<i>Waki-zure</i>
OLD MAN	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
OLD WOMAN	<i>Tsure</i>
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>kyōgen</i>
MYŌJIN, DEITY OF THE SUMIYOSHI SHRINE	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two

Place

Takasago in Harima Province (Part One)
Sumiyoshi (or Suminoye) in Settsu Province (Part Two)

Season

Spring

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music shin-no-shidai is being played, TOMONARI, PRIEST of the Aso SHRINE, advances to the centre of the stage, followed by TWO ATTENDANTS, who take up positions facing TOMONARI. The former wears a court minister's cap, heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe, and white broad divided skirt. The ATTENDANTS are also similarly attired.

TOMONARI and ATTENDANTS

shidai To-day we don our travelling dress,
To-day we don our travelling dress,
Long is the journey before us.

CHORUS To-day we don our travelling dress,
jidori Long is the journey before us.

TOMONARI and ATTENDANTS

To-day we don our travelling dress,
To-day we don our travelling dress,
Long is the journey before us.

TOMONARI I am Tomonari, priest of the Aso Shrine in Higo Province in Kyūshū. Never having seen Miyako, I intend to journey thither and shall take the excellent opportunity thus offered me to visit the Bay of Takasago in Harima Province.



TOMONARI and ATTENDANTS

michi-yuki Clad in travelling attire

To-day we take boat
And set out for distant Miyako,
And set out for distant Miyako.
Soft spring breezes belly our
sails;
Gazing ahead and behind,
For days past count
Naught can we see save clouds and sea,
Till what once seemed remote
Now drifts into view
And Takasago Bay is reached at last,
And Takasago Bay is reached at last.



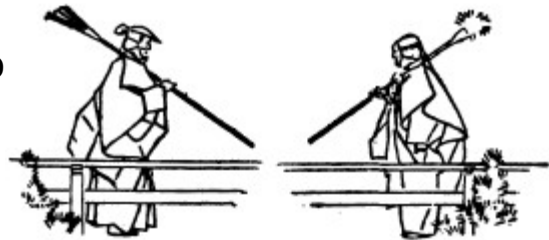
TOMONARI Travelling in haste, we have now reached Takasago. Let us stop here awhile and enquire about this place.

ATTENDANTS As you will, sir.

Moves to the Waki Seat while the ATTENDANTS sit on his right

While the entrance music shin-no-issei is being played, the OLD WOMAN carrying a besom, followed by the OLD MAN carrying a rake, appears on the Bridgeway. The OLD WOMAN stops by the First Pine and the OLD MAN by the Third Pine. The OLD WOMAN wears an 'old woman' mask, 'old woman' wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, 'not-red' brocade outer-kimono, and broad-sleeved robe; the OLD MAN an 'old man' mask, 'old man' wig, small-checked under-Kimono, and broad-sleeved robe and white broad divided skirt.

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
issei The spring breezes
Murmur in the Taka-sago
Pine.
The day is closing in,
And the bell on the hill
Tolls the curfew.



OLD WOMAN The shore mists veil
the waves

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
That with their voices tell
The sea's ebb and flow.

OLD MAN "Who is now left that knew me well?
sashi This Takasago Pine,
Though venerable indeed,
Is not my old-time friend."¹

Advancing on to the stage, the OLD WOMAN stands in the centre and the OLD MAN by the Shite Pillar.

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
Countless years have passed
Dropping their snowy mantle on our heads;
Like aged cranes
On a frosty spring morning
Under the paling moon,
We awake on our rush-mat
To the familiar murmur of the Pine,

And communing with our hearts,
We vent our thoughts in verse.

sage-uta Our only visitor, the bay-breeze,
Whispers in the Pine;
From the tree
The needles are falling upon our sleeves;
Besom in hand,
Let us sweep them away,
Let us sweep them away.

age-uta Here at Takasago,
Here at Takasago
Each day the Onoye Pine grows
older
And advances in years.
How we have aged,
Sweeping away the fallen
needles under the pine!
Shall we live on for many a year to come
Like the ancient sturdy pines
Of long-famed Iki,¹
Of long-famed Iki?



The OLD MAN moves to the centre and and the OLD WOMAN to the Waki Front.

3

TOMONARI We have been waiting for a villager. Look, an old couple
has just appeared over there! Pardon me, I have something to
ask you.

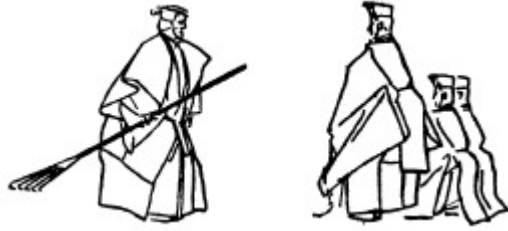
Rises.

OLD MAN Were you speaking to me? What is it you wish?

TOMONARI Pray tell me which is the Takasago Pine.

OLD MAN This is the Takasago Pine under which we are now
sweeping.

TOMONARI The Takasago and the Suminoye Pines are called the 'Twin Pines' but how can this be when Takasago and Sumiyoshi are different places?



OLD MAN You are right. In the Preface to the *Kokinshū*, it is written, "The Pines of Takasago and of Suminoye seem like twins." I myself come from Sumiyoshi in Settsu Province, but this old woman is a native of this place. If you know anything about this Pine, you had better tell this priest.

Turns towards the OLD WOMAN.

TOMONARI 'Tis passing strange,
This aged pair should dwell apart,
He in Suminoye and she in Takasago!
Tell me, I pray, how this can be.

OLD WOMAN You speak strangely.
Though miles of land and sea may part them,
The hearts of man and wife are joined by love ;
Naught do they reckon of distance.

OLD MAN Well, you should know!

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN

If the Takasago and the Suminoye Pines,
Though not endowed with feeling,
Are called the Twins,
How much more then should we—
This woman and myself?
From Sumiyoshi daily I have come
For many years to visit her.
Like these Twin Pines we have grown old together
A loving wife and husband.

TOMONARI Your words fill me with wonder!
But can you not tell me
Some ancient tale about these pines?

OLD MAN According to the ancient dwellers of this place, they
symbolize auspicious Imperial reigns:

OLD WOMAN Takasago, the old 'Manyōshū' days,

OLD MAN Sumiyoshi, our present Emperor's¹ reign,

OLD WOMAN And the unfading greenery of the Pines

OLD MAN Stands for the art of poetry flourishing as of old,

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN

Fostered by the August Majesty whom all revere.

TOMONARI How noble is your tale!

Now all my doubts have fled.

OLD MAN Under the warm sunshine, by western seas,

TOMONARI There at Suminoye,

OLD MAN Here at Takasago,

TOMONARI The Pines put on a greener green...

OLD MAN O peaceful days

TOMONARI Of spring!

CHORUS Calm lies over the Four Seas,

*While the CHORUS is singing, the OLD WOMAN goes and sits down in front
of the CHORUS.*

age-uta The world's at peace,
The soft wind scarcely moves the boughs;
In such a reign as this
Happy are the pines born at one time
And growing old together.
In vain words strive to tell
The happiness of those whose days are lived
Under our Sovereign's blessed rule,
Under our Sovereign's blessed rule.



TOMONARI *sits down.*

TOMONARI Pray tell me more about the auspicious Takasago Pine.

CHORUS Plants and trees, men say, have no soul,

kuri Yet in due season they blossom and bear fruit.

Under the warm spring sun
The branches on the south side flower first.

OLD MAN But the pine-tree
sashi Throughout the year
Remains forever unchanged.

CHORUS Though spring may flee and winter come,
Its everlasting green
Even in the snow
Grows greener.
"Ten times the pine shall bloom!"¹
So says the ancient prophecy.

OLD MAN In this auspicious reign
CHORUS Jewelled words, like glistening dew-drops,
Light up our people's minds,

OLD MAN Awaking in all living beings

CHORUS The love of poetry.

kuse For, as Chōnō writes,¹

All nature's voices
Are instinct with poetry.
Herb or tree,
Earth or sand,
Sough of wind and roar of
waters,
Each encloses in itself the Universe;
Spring forests stirring in the eastern wind,
Autumn insects chirping in the dewy grass,
Are they not each a poem?
Yet of all trees the pine is lord
Endued with princely dignity.
Changeless from age to age,
Its fadeless green endures a thousand years;
And fitly did the Emperor of Shin²
Bestow high rank upon the pine
In other lands as in our own,
All men unite to praise the pine.



OLD MAN At Takasago the bell of Onoye is tolling;³

Rises with the rake in his hand.

CHORUS 'Tis dawn and freezing hard,
Yet the dark green leaves suffer no harm.
Morning and evening
The fallen leaves are raked away,
Yet never fails their store,
But grows more green.
Of all the evergreens
The Twin Pines,—
Blessed emblems of long life—
Have ever been extolled.



The OLD MAN mimes the action of raking up the pine-needles.

The OLD MAN sits down.

5

CHORUS Truly like the pines of ancient fame,
rongi Truly like the pines of ancient fame,
Long have you lived. Pray tell me now
Your past history and your names.

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
Why should we aught conceal?
We are the spirits
Of the Twin Pines of Suminoye and Taka-sago
In human form as man and wife.



CHORUS How marvellous is the miracle
Of these famed pine-trees!

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
Trees and plants,
Though not endowed with soul,

CHORUS —In this auspicious reign,—

OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN
Nay even the earth and grasses,

CHORUS Sharing the glory of this realm,
Live gratefully under our Sovereign's peaceful sway.

Now to Sumiyoshi I will sail
And there await your coming.
—So saying, he boards a fishing-boat

The OLD MAN rises and mimes the action of boarding a boat.



Moored by the water's edge,
And on a following breeze
Swiftly is wafted out to sea,
Swiftly is wafted out to sea.

The OLD MAN approaches the Shite Pillar and goes out, followed by the OLD WOMAN.



INTERLUDE

TOMONARI orders an ATTENDANT to call the MAN OF THE PLACE. He advances on to the stage from the kyōgen Seat, wearing a check-patterned kimono, kyōgen robe and divided skirt. In reply to TOMONARI's question, the MAN tells him the legend of the Twin Pines and goes out after offering to take him to Sumiyoshi in his new boat.

PART TWO

1

Rising, move to the centre of the stage, take up their positions, the former facing the latter.

TOMONARI and ATTENDANTS

machi-utai From Takasago Bay,

Hoisting our sails,

Hoisting our sails,

Under the climbing moon

We put out on the flowing tide.

Leaving behind the isle of Awaji¹

And passing distant Naruo²

To Suminoye we have come,
To Suminoye we have come.

Return to their seats and sit down.

2

While the entrance music deha is being played, MYŌJIN, DEITY OF THE SUMIYOSHI SHRINE advances along the Bridgeway and takes his stand by the First Pine. He wears a 'man of Kantan' mask, long black-hair wig, 'open-work' crown, red-and-white striped heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe and white broad divided skirt.

MYŌJIN "Long years have sped
sashi Since first I saw
The Pine of Sumiyoshi by the sea.
How many ages has it seen?"¹
"Dost thou not know the bond between us,
And how since ancient days
My blessings I have poured on the Imperial
House?"²
And, ye musicians of the Shrine,
This night let sacred music,
Dance and throbs of drums
Rejoice my heart!



MYŌJIN enters the stage and dances, while the following lines are chanted.

CHORUS Forth from the waves of the western sea
That beat on Aoki-ga-hara,
MYŌJIN I first arose-the God himself.³
'Tis spring and melting snow
Lies lightly on Asaka Beach.⁴
CHORUS By the rocks where men gather seaweed,
MYŌJIN "I recline on the ancient pine roots;
CHORUS A thousand years of evergreen fill my palm;
MYŌJIN Plucking a spray of plum

I deck my hair,
CHORUS And petals, like spring snow, fall o'er my robe"¹

MYŌJIN *dances a kami-mai dance.*

3



CHORUS O blessed vision,
rongi O blessed vision!
Under the lovely moon
Before the Sumiyoshi Shrine the God is dancing!
Awe fills our hearts.

MYŌJIN The voices of the dancing maids rise clear,
The waters of the bay
Mirror the Pine of Suminoye—
This is the 'Blue Sea' dance."²

CHORUS Straight is the way of the Gods and the
Sovereign

And straight the road to Miyako

MYŌJIN By which the traveller 'Returns to the Imperial
City.'³

CHORUS Clad in auspicious

MYŌJIN *Omi robe—,*⁴

CHORUS Dread spirits quelling, arms are stretched out,
Life and treasure gathering, arms are inwards
drawn.

'A Thousand Autumns'¹

Rejoices the people's hearts;

And 'Ten Thousand Years'²

Endows them with new life.

The souging of wind in the Twin
Pines

With gladness fills each heart,

With gladness fills each heart!



MYŌJIN *stamps twice on the stage at the Shite Seat,*

Footnotes

[1](#) Eighth century anthology containing and16 Japanese poems. A selection of and00 pieces was translated into English and published for our Society in 1940 (third impression, 1948).

[2](#) Tenth century anthology containing and00 poems, and the first of a series of twenty-one similar publications subsequently compiled by Imperial order during the following five centuries.

[1](#) Calm lies over the Four Seas... Under our Sovereign's blessed rule (Part 1, scene 3).

[1](#) Poem by Fujiwara-no-Okikaze (slightly modified) in the *Kokinshū*,

[1](#) Ancient pine grove on the coast of Chikuzen Province, Kyūshū, alleged according to tradition to have sprung from a spray of pine-needles stuck in the ground by the Empress Jingū (beginning of the third century) while preparing for her expedition against Korea.

[1](#) Emperor Daigo (898-930) by whose order the *Kokinshū* was compiled.

[1](#) Part of a couplet found in the *Shinsen Wakan Rōeishū* (c. 1100), expressing a courtier's wishes for his Imperial master's prosperity. Since, according to an old saying, the pine-tree blossoms once every thousand years, the wished-for length of the reign is ten thousand years-a hyperbolical rhetorical expression frequently found in congratulatory verse and prose of this period.

[1](#) Eleventh century poet. The following nine lines are taken from his essay on poetics.

[2](#) I.e. Ch'in, founder of the Ch'in dynasty (246-207 B.C.)- In the twenty-eighth year of his reign he climbed Mt. T'ai in Shantung. While descending the mountains, he was caught in a heavy storm and took shelter under a pine-tree, which miraculously began to grow larger until its branches sheltered the august personage and his retinue from the rain. In recognition of this service the emperor conferred on the tree the fifth court rank.

[3](#) Poem by Ōe-no-Masafusa in the *Senzaishū* (1187), alluding to the belief that severe frost makes the bell ring of itself.

[1](#) Island which separates the Bay of Osaka from the western part of the Inland Sea.

[2](#) Town at the mouth of the river Muko, east of Kobe.

[1](#) Poem composed, according to the *Ise Monogatari*, by a certain emperor on his visit to the Sumiyoshi Shrine.

[2](#) Poem composed in reply to the above by the God of Sumiyoshi who appeared assuming a visible form.

3 Modified quotation from Urabe-no-Kanenao's poem to the effect that when the God Izanagi after his visit to the nether world purified himself in the sea at Aoki-ga-hara (Hyūga Province, Kyūshū), the God of Sumiyoshi was born from the waves.

4 Name given to the coast near the Sumiyoshi Shrine.

1 Quatrain by Tachibana-no-Aritsura contained in the *Wakan Rōeishū* (c. 1013).

2 I.e. *seigaiha*—a classical dance of Chinese or Korean origin still occasionally performed by the Imperial Household musicians at State banquets.

3 I.e. *genshō-raku*—a classical dance

4 White upper-garment with designs painted green, formerly worn by court dancers and the officiating priest on the occasion of important Shinto rites or at court banquets.

1 I.e. *senshū-raku-a* musical composition by Minamoto no-Yoriyoshi used in 1069 on the occasion of the *daijōe*, one of the principal Shinto rites connected with the Japanese enthronement ceremony.

2 I.e. *manzai-raku*—a classical dance attributed to the Empress Wu (623-705) of the T'ang dynasty

TAMURA



CHORUS The very sky seems drunk
With the flowers' beauty.
—Part I, scene 4.

INTRODUCTION

Tamura is one of the three *kachi-shura* (victory *Asura*) pieces, the other two being *Yashima* and *Ebira*. Unlike the protagonists of the other *shura-mono* who are generally defeated warriors, the heroes of these plays are victorious generals, thus explaining their great popularity among the samurai in feudal times.

Tamura has three distinctive features. The protagonist, Tamura-maru,¹ was a famous captain who lived before the Gempei (i.e. Genji and Heike) period (1156-1192), instead of being a Genji or Heike warrior, as is usually the case in the *shura-mono*. While the ghosts of defeated warriors, returning to this world, generally lament their sufferings in the world of the *Asura*,² here the hero makes no mention of the hell. Finally, the dance-like mime called *kakeri* which in other *shura-mono* describes the ceaseless strife of the *Asura* world, is used in *Tamura* to suggest the exploits of TAMURA-MARU on the battle-field. In the present play emphasis is laid on the valour of TAMURA-MARU and his devotion to Kwannon,³ through whose help he, as commander-in-chief, was enabled to achieve a decisive victory in the campaign against the Eastern barbarians.

Out of gratitude for this victory, TAMURA-MARU erected the Seisui-ji Temple (Kiyomizu-dera)¹ in honour of Kwannon on the eastern outskirts of Miyako. Later, a shrine, called Tamura-dō, was dedicated to the memory of the celebrated general in the precincts of the same temple.

It is evening, the cherry-trees are in full bloom and a travelling monk, accompanied by his attendants, is visiting the Seisui-ji Temple. The ghost of Tamura maru appears to him in the shape of a youth charged with guarding the cherry-trees. In answer to the monk's questions, the lad recounts the history of the temple and after pointing out the famous beauty spots in the neighbourhood, disappears into the Tamura-dō. Filled with pious emotion the monk

sits under a cherry-tree and intones the *Lotus Sutra*. The ghost reappears and tells him how with the gracious help of Kwannon he was able to vanquish the demons in the Suzuka Mountains.²

While ostensibly centring round Tamura-maru, the play also deals with the founding of the Seisui-ji Temple, thus affording the author an opportunity to extol the boundless mercy of Bodhisattva Kwannon.

The play is divided into two parts, each of which is divided into three conventional sections, i.e. *jo* (introduction), *ha* (development) including *kuse* (song and dance), and *kyū* (climax). In Part One the *kuse* portrays a tranquil landscape in cherry-blossom time; In Part Two it tells how Kwannon aided the warrior Tamura-maru. The contrast in tempo and atmosphere between the two parts is skilfully used to intensify the dramatic effect.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: *Konjaku Monogatari* (Tales Ancient and Modern)

TAMURA

Persons

MONK FROM THE EASTLAND ¹	<i>Waki</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	<i>Waki-zure</i>
YOUTH	<i>Shite in Part One</i>
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>Kyōgen</i>
GHOST OF SAKANOUÉ-NO-TAMURA-MARU	<i>Shite in Part Two</i>

Place

Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Miyako

Season

Spring

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the MONK FROM THE EASTLAND, accompanied by TWO ATTENDANTS, crosses the Bridgeway and goes to the centre of the stage. He wears a pointed hood, plain kimono, and broad-sleeved robe. The ATTENDANTS are also similarly attired.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

shidai Across many a province following the Imperial highway,
Across many a province following the Imperial highway,
We hasten towards spring-clad Miyako of the nine-gates.¹

CHORUS Across many a province following the Imperial highway,
jidori We hasten towards spring-clad Miyako of the nine gates.

MONK I am a monk from the Eastland. As I have not yet seen Miyako, I am journeying thither in spring-time.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

michi-yuki 'Tis mid-March,
Across the tranquil sky,
Across the tranquil sky
Leisurely rolls the sun,
And yonder swathed in mist
lies Otowa Hill.
At last, where crystal waters
softly murmur,
We reach Kiyomizu-dera,
We reach Kiyomizu-dera.



MONK Travelling in haste, we have reached a temple in Miyako which people call the seisui-ji. Here the cherry-trees are in full bloom. Let us wait till some one passes by and ask him about this place.

FIRST ATTENDANT

It will be well to do so.

They cross to the Waki Seat and sit down.

2

While the entrance music issei is being played, the YOUTH enters the stage carrying a hagi besom¹ in his hand and takes his stand by the Shite Pillar. He wears a 'boy' mask, flowing black-hair wig, brocade head-band, embroidered Kimono and broad-sleeved robe.

YOUTH The cherry-blossoms
issei In the precincts of the shrine
Are Spring's offering to the Deity.²
sashi Many a place is famed for cherry-trees,
But none can boast such blossoms;
Methinks the charity of Kwannon
Adds lustre to their hue.



Like fragrance of spring flowers,
His boundless love and mercy
Fill the land of the Ten Evils³
And like the autumn moon,
His thirty-three-fold form⁴
Upon the waters of the Five Defilements⁵
Shines undefiled.

sage-uta See! The garden of the God
Is filled with snow!

age-uta In dazzling white
Buried are clouds and mist,
Buried are clouds and mist.
Try as I may, no branches can I see;
Double and single blossoms hang like clouds
Over Miyako of the nine-gates,
Set in the frame of hills
Decked in their spring glory,
Decked in their spring glory.



3

MONK Hullo, boy, I want to ask you a question.

Rises and addresses the YOUTH.

YOUTH Were you speaking to me, sir? What can I do for you?

MONK I see, you are sweeping beneath the trees with a jewelled
besom. Are you perhaps the gardener?

YOUTH Yes, I minister to the deity of
the place. I always sweep
beneath the trees at
blossomtime, so I may be called
the gardener or servant of the
shrine. Anyhow you may
consider me belonging to the
shrine.



MONK Since you seem to be so closely connected with this shrine,
will you tell me the History of the temple?

YOUTH You must know that this
katari 'Seisui-ji' Temple was founded
in the second year of Daiaō¹ by
Sakanoue-no-Ta-mura-maru in
fulfilment of his vow. Long ago, at
the Koshima Temple, in Yamato
Province, there lived a monk
called Genshin, who resolved to
see Kwannon in human form. One day seeing a golden light
proceeding from the upper reaches of the River Kotsu,¹ he
followed it to its source. There he found an old man, who said
to him, "I am Gyōe Koji. You will meet with a benefactor and
with his aid you will build a great temple in my honour." With
that the old man flew away towards the east. Now Gyōe Koji
was no other than a manifestation of Bodhisattva Kwannon in
human shape.



The donor he was told to wait for
Proved to be Tamura-maru.

CHORUS Since then
age-uta The fame of this Pure Water²
Has never ceased.
Diverse are the God's great vows
And countless as his thousand hands.³
All praise to His Great Charity!
His blessed vows reach every corner of the
land
And multitudes of men.
From the Land of Supreme Bliss
Kwannon visits this world of sorrow



The YOUTH goes to the Metsuke Pillar.

To heal our ills.
Should we not then adore him with all our being,
Should we not then adore him with all our being?

Approaching the Shite

Pillar, the YOUTH hands his besom to a Stage-attendant.

4

MONK Well, it is rare nowadays to find a person as interesting as yourself. I suppose all the places I can see from here are famous. Please tell me about them.

YOUTH Yes, they all are famous. Ask me any question you like and I will tell you with pleasure.



MONK First, tell me what is that pagoda to the south?

YOUTH That is the Seigan-ji Temple¹ of Uta-no-nakayama. You can also see as far as Imagumano.²

Faces the Front audience.

Faces the Front audience.

MONK What is that temple to the north, whose evening bell is now tolling?

YOUTH It is the sacred "Vulture Peak' Temple.³ But see! The moon is rising over Otowa Hill and shines upon the cherry-blossoms round the Jishu Gongen. This is the finest view.

MONK This is Spring's rapturous hour,
Which banishes all other thoughts.

Turns towards the Flute-player and looks upwards.

Looks in the same direction and then turns towards the Waki Pillar.

The YOUTH and the MONK again face the Front audience.

YOUTH Truly we should cherish it jealously.

MONK We should indeed.

MONK and YOUTH

“The scent of flowers,
A hazy moon,
A single spring evening
Are worth a thousand golden pieces”¹

The YOUTH touches him on the shoulder.

YOUTH Nay, far more precious
Than a thousand coins of gold
Is this very hour.

CHORUS The cherry-blossoms of the Jishu
sage-uta Gongen!
What a breath-taking sight!
The moon-rays pierce the branches,
Evening breezes tempt the blossoms,
Filling the air with snowy petals
And ravishing the heart!



The MONK goes to the Waki Seat and sits down. The YOUTH dances while the following lines are chanted.

kuse Truly worthy of its name
Is Flowery Miyako under the vernal sky,
When spring is decked in all her beauty. Endless delight
Are the green shadows of the budding willows
Stirred by the gentle breezes,
Like the silvery threads which ceaseless flow
Over the Otowa waterfalls!
Matchless in hue
The cherry-blossoms of the Jishu Gongen!



YOUTH "Have but faith in me,
Ye, who are like moxa-weeds on Shimeji Moor:

CHORUS While yet in this world I dwell."¹
This vow shall ever inviolate endure
Like the 'Pure Water' of Kiyomizu;
And as they deck the willow-trees with tender green,
So does His virtue make dead boughs to bloom.
In the pale moonlight,
Cherry-trees everywhere are in their glory;
The very sky seems drunk
With the flowers' beauty.
O magic springtide,
O magic springtide!

The YOUTH sits down in the centre of the stage.

5

The MONK turns to-wards the YOUTH.

CHORUS From your noble looks
rongi You seem no common mortal.
What may your name be?

YOUTH Though I be nameless,
If you would learn who I am,
Watch as to the temple I return.

CHORUS Where is your home? Is it as close As are
laced reeds in a wattle fence,
"Or far from here

YOUTH Lost among the pathless mountains?"²

CHORUS If you are in doubt,
Watch where I go—so saying,
He leaves the Jishu Gongen.
Look, he seems moving down the hill,
No, he's climbing upwards
To where Tamura Shrine tops the
slope,
And throwing wide its moon-blanching
portals,
He glides across the hall
And vanishes into the sanctuary.

The YOUTH rises and takes a few steps forward and then moves away from the Metsu-ke Pillar towards the Orchestra and with his fan he mimes the action of opening the door and then steps up to the Shite Pillar and goes out.

INTERLUDE

The MAN OF THE PLACE who has been sitting on the kyōgen Seat rises and enters the stage. He wears a check-patterned kimono, kyōgen robe and divided skirt. In answer to the MONK's enquiry as to who was the mysterious figure which has just disappeared into the sanctuary, the Man replies that it must



have been the GHOST of Tamura-maru himself and suggests that he would do well to stay awhile and recite the Lotus Sutra for him. Approaching the Waki Seat, he addresses the MONK, and relates the history of the temple and how Tamura-maru routed the demons of the Suzuka Mountains.

PART TWO

1

MONK and ATTENDANTS

machi-utai All through the night
Under a rain of petals,
Under a rain of petals,
As the moon takes her unfaltering way,
Seated in the Courts of the Holy Law
Canopied with wondrous flowers,
We chant the Holy Sutra,
We chant the Holy Sutra.



2

While the entrance music issei is being played' the Ghost of TAMURA-MARU enters the stage and takes his stand by the Shite Pillar. He wears a Heida mask, long black-hair wig, tall black cap secured by a white head-band, heavy silk kimono, gold-brocade robe with left shoulder uncovered. divided skirt and sword.

Turns towards the MONK.

Faces the Front audience.

TAMURA-MARU

sashi By Kiyomizu-dera's waterfall
I shall address this traveller,
Whom from a past life
I was ordained to meet,
Perhaps because we both

Once drank of the same stream.¹
His night-long chanting of the Sutra
Commends my soul to the protection
Of Kwannon the All-Merciful.

MONK O wondrous sight!
Behold! A human form
Gleaming amidst the flowers!
Who may you be?



TAMURA-MARU
No longer shall I conceal my name;
Sakanoue-no-Tamura-maru am I
Who lived in the reign of Heizei,¹
Fifty-first Emperor.



CHORUS 'Twas I subdued the barbarous Eastern tribe
And vanquished the demon hosts;
I proved myself a loyal warrior
And brought peace back to the Imperial realm.
All this was wrought
By virtue of Holy Sattva
Who dwells within this temple.

3

TAMURA-MARU goes to the centre of the stage

CHORUS An order from the gracious Sovereign
sashi Decrees I shall subdue
The tribe of demons
Infesting the Suzuka Mountains
And restore peace to town and country.
Obeying his command I raised an army.
Hither came I on the eve of departure;
And calling on All-Merciful Kwannon
I made my vow.



TAMURA-MARU sit on a stool.

TAMURA-MARU

Marvellous signs were granted;
CHORUS The Image smiled.
Confidently we set forth against the evil tribe—
kuse "On the broad earth, under the vast heavens
Can there be a land our Sovereign ruleth not?—²
Anon we crossed Ōsaka Pass¹
Whose barrier-gates no longer shall be closed.
Leaving Awazu Wood
Hard by the rippling lake,
We reached the Stony Mountain Temple.²
Here we invoked the Sattva enshrined at
Kiyomizu;
Then following the Ōmi Road,
Clattered across the Long Bridge of Seta,
Steeds prancing with warlike ardour.



Stamps on the stage to indicate the clatter of horses' hoofs.

TAMURA-MARU
The hills of Ise now come near.

Rises.

CHORUS Like eager plum-trees bursting into bloom,
The stalwart warriors forward press,
Each with other vying
Like springtime flowers and autumn leaves.
This land divine—

Going to the front of the stage, TAMURA-MARU dances while the following lines are chanted.

O'er its soil and trees our Sovereign rules,—
As long as Kwannon's promise aids us,
Is guarded by gods and countless buddhas.
Unmindful of my warriors' approach,
Like unsuspecting deer
The demons lie on Suzuka,
A place of holy memories,



For in ancient days
The Suzuka purification¹ was here performed.

4

CHORUS Hill-shaking and stream-tossing demon-cries Fill the earth
and echo to the skies, And the green hills tremble before our
eyes.

*A kakeri, suggestive of TAMURA-MARU's encounter with the
demons, is executed.*

5

TAMURA-MARU

Ye demons, hearken to my words: Remember
what happened in ancient times when the demons
serving the Rebel Chikata were scattered by Heaven
for their defiance of the Imperial will; and hardly had
they left their leader, when the traitor was
vanquished.²



*During the whole of the concluding scene, TAMURA-MARU
accompanies the words by dramatic gestures and movements.*

How dare you therefore haunt
The Suzuka Mountains hard by Miyako?

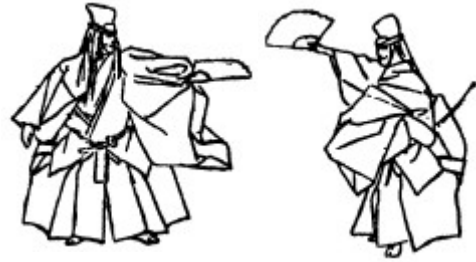
CHORUS In the far distance lies the Ise Sea, In the far distance lies
the Ise Sea.

Goes towards the Flute-player

Along the shore,
Numberless as the pines of Ano¹
Swarm the demon-hosts
Who spew forth inky clouds and dreadful thunderbolts,
Then, transformed into countless ranks of horse,
Like mountains upon us they bear down.

TAMURA-MARU

See yonder-a miracle, miracle!
 CHORUS See yonder-a miracle, miracle!
 Above the banners of our host
 The dazzling rays of the
 Thousand-Armed
 Flash across the sky;
 Each arm holds a mercy-bow,
 And each its wisdom-arrow;
 Together a thousand arrows He lets fly
 Which beat like rain or hail upon the demons
 Till all are stricken down.
 Praise be to Kwannon! Praise be to Kwannon!
 "With Whose aid,
 Ever to be invoked²
 Against all evil spells and poisons,
 Our foes we vanquished.
 Thus wickedness
 Is turned by Him against its authors,
 Is turned by Him against its authors."
 Such, indeed, is Kwannon's divine
 power.



TAMURA-MARU *stamps twice on the stage at the Shite Seat.*

Footnotes

¹ Born in the Eastland (see p. 23, note), he early entered the Imperial service, occupying successively with distinction such important posts as general of the Right Wing of the Imperial Body-guard, prefect, commander of an expeditionary army against the barbarians and court minister. His tomb on the outskirts of Kyoto, where he was buried clad in full armour, is called the 'General's Tomb.' It is said that before the outbreak of a war warning rumbles were heard proceeding from his tomb. Upon being appointed to the command of an expeditionary force, it was customary for generals to go and pay homage there.

² *Asuras* inhabit one of the six worlds of transmigration. They are full of jealousy and hatred, continuously engaged in fighting one another as a punishment for the deeds of violence committed in their previous life, until they have worked out their *karma* or until, as in the present case, through invocation of

Amida and by virtue of His great vow, they have achieved enlightenment and are reborn in the Western Paradise.

3 Abbreviated form of Kwanzeon Bosatsu, i.e. Bodhisattva hearkening to the prayers of humanity. Kwannon (Skr. Avalokiteshvara) and Seishi (Skr. Mahasthamaprapta), symbolizing respectively mercy and wisdom, are commonly found on either side of Amida in the representation of Amida triad. Whenever Kwannon is invoked by some one in distress, he immediately comes to his succour, assuming a form appropriate to the occasion. It should be noted that in the West Kwannon is usually referred to as the 'Goddess of Mercy,' probably because in the pictorial and sculptural representation the bodhisattva is represented as a female. In India, China and Japan, however, Kwannon, like nearly all other bodhisattvas, are invariably regarded as being of the male sex.

1 These two apparently very different names are due to the different ways of pronouncing the Chinese characters used to write the temple's name, i.e. 清水寺, the one being the Chinese and the other the Japanese pronunciation of the original name. The temple belongs to the Hossō sect and is situated on one of the hills on the eastern outskirts of Kyoto. It was founded towards the end of the eighth century by the hermit Genshin. In 798 in fulfilment of his vow, Tamura-maru donated his mansion for the construction of a new temple which was later destroyed by fire and rebuilt. The present buildings date from 1634, when they were completely rebuilt by the Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. The precincts contain a shrine called the Tamura-do dedicated to the general. To the rear of the main edifice there is another shrine at the top of a flight of stone steps, dedicated to Jishu Gongen (Land-Owner Deity), i.e. the genius loci. In the ravine, on the edge of which the temple stands, there is a waterfall named Otowa or more descriptively Shiraito (white threads). The flow of water is small, but so clear that it is said to have given the place the name of 'Kiyomizu,' i.e. 'pure water.'

2 Mountain range separating Omi and Ise Provinces which forms the watershed between the east-flowing rivers which pour into the Bay of Ise and the west-flowing ones which empty themselves into

1 Literal translation of Tōgoku, the comprehensive name given to the provinces east of Kyoto, including the Tōkaidō.

1 Conventional epithet for the Imperial City. The phrase was borrowed from ancient China, where visitors from abroad to the Imperial court had to pass through nine gates, the first of which being situated on the frontier.

1 Broom made of bush-clover stems.

2 I.e. Jishu Gongen. See p. 22, note 1.

3 Ten sins warned against in the Buddhist Ten Commandments, i.e. murder, theft, adultery, lying, immoral language, equivocation, slandering, covetousness, anger, wrong ideas, the first three being committed by the body, the middle four by the tongue, and the last three by the mind.

4 It is said in the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, which describes the all-embracing merciful powers of Bodhisattva Kwannon, that, whenever appealed to, he immediately comes to the rescue of the distressed, taking one of his thirty-three visible forms.

5 Or Five Corruptions. The world during and since Sakyamuni's time is characterized by five evil conditions, i.e. corruption of the times (abundance of calamities), corruption of thought (prevalence of wrong ideas), corruption of feeling (evil passions), corruption of people (weak bodies and degenerate characters), corruption of life (man's life shortened).

1 I.e. A.D. 804.

1 River which springs in Mie Prefecture and flows into the river Yodo below Kyoto.

2 I.e. Kiyomizu.

3 The Thousand-armed Kwannon enshrined in the temple has actually only forty arms, the hands of which have an eye in the middle of each palm. This form of Kwannon symbolizes the immeasurable powers and unlimited devices which the bodhisattva uses to save those who rely upon him.

1 famous temple situated to the southeast of Kiyomizu among the same hills which was first established in the ninth century and is now partly in ruins.

2 Shinto shrine, farther south, established in the twelfth century by an emperor who was a devotee of the goddess Izanami enshrined at Kumano. Wishing to have another shrine to the goddess near Miyako, he built the present one. Hence the name "Ima-Gumano" (i.e. Now-Kumano).

3 Washino-o in Japanese. In China and Japan a temple, as a rule, has two names, that of the mountain and that of the temple itself. In the present case the former is 'Vulture Peak' and the latter Shōbōji. Dengyō Daishi, the founder of the Japanese Tendai sect, founded the temple towards the end of the eighth century soon after his return from China, giving it this name because the shape of the hill, on which it is situated, resembled that of the Vulture Peak in India, on which Buddha preached the *Lotus Sutra*.

1 Quoted from a poem by Su Tung-po (蘇東坡) (1036-1101) which may be rendered:

A single hour of a spring evening is worth one thousand pieces of gold;
Flowers send forth scent and the moon is misty;
The notes of the flute from the upper storey grow faint;
The swing in the court hangs motionless in the night air.

1 Poem in the *Shin Kokinshū* (1205) attributed to the Kiyomizu Kwannon. It is supposed to have been addressed to a woman in grief who said that if there was no hope, she would take her own life.

2 Quoted from an anonymous poem in the *Kokinshū* which reads:

Lost among the mountains
With no sign of any village far or near,
'Tis sad to hear
The cuckoo's cries.

1 Allusion to a proverbial saying commonly met with in mediaeval Japanese literature. In its complete form it runs: "If two people happen to rest under the same tree or to drink from the same stream, this apparent accident was destined to occur because of some relationship existing between them in a former life." The idea is Buddhistic.

1 Reigned 806-809. Tamura-maru also served the preceding Emperor Kammu (781-806).

2 Poem in the *Shi-King* (Book of Odes). Literally translated, the lines run:
Under the all-covering heavens
Or as far as the shores of the continuous land,
There is not a foot of land that is not the king's,
Nor a man who is not his subject.

1 Pass running across the boundary line between the metropolitan province of Yamashiro and Ōmi Province. In olden times it was marked by a barrier which was strictly guarded. The phrase qualifying Osaka Pass expresses the desire for perfect peace throughout the land.

2 I.e. Ishiyama-dera. The temple stands on the right bank of the river Seta issuing from Lake Biwa. Founded in the eighth century, its main edifice has remained intact. The temple is dedicated to Kwannon. According to tradition, it was in one of the chambers of this temple that Lady Mura-saki wrote her great work the *Genji Monogatari*.

1 In ancient times an Imperial princess newly appointed to serve as priestess of the Ise Shrine used to undergo purification in the waters of the river Suzuka.

2 Anecdote found in the *Taiheiki* where it reads as follows: In the reign of the Emperor Tenji a wicked man called Fujiwara-no-Chikata with four demons in his service, called respectively Metal, Wind, Water and Invisible Demon, endowed with various superhuman powers, succeeded in alienating the people of Ise and Iga Provinces from the Imperial rule. Consequently a courtier-warrior Ki-no-Tomo-o was sent to subdue the rebels, and having arrived in the enemy territory, sent the demons this poem:

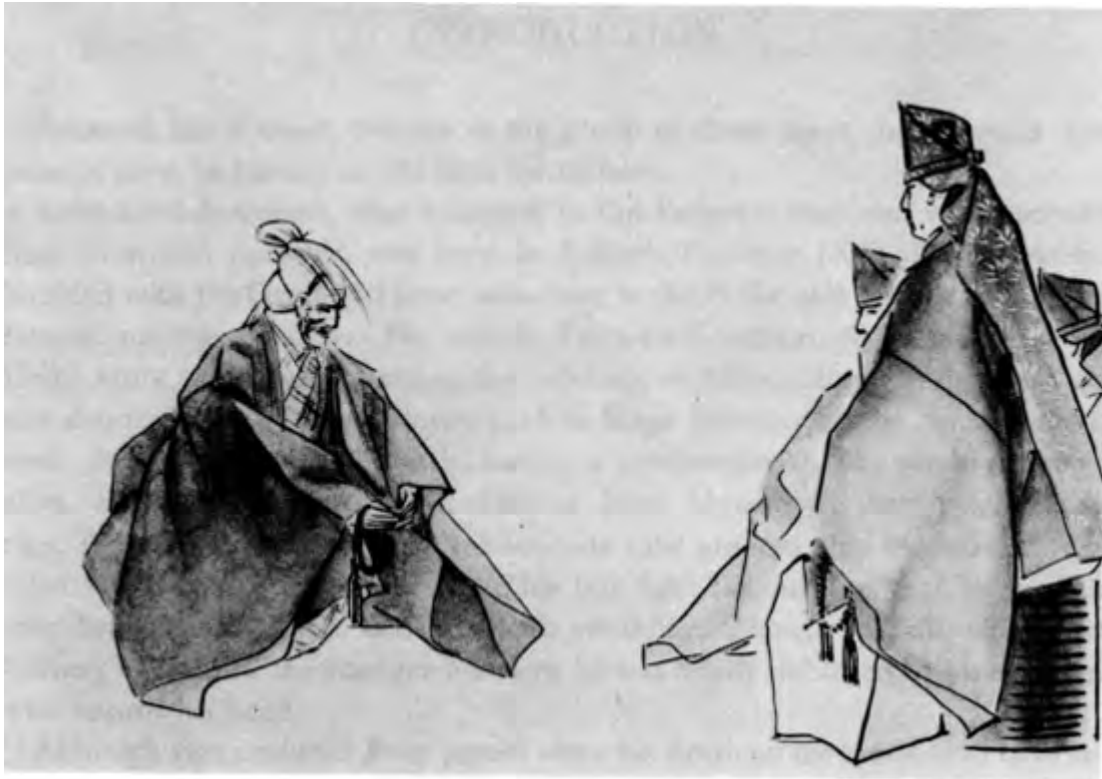
Since all the land,
Even the trees and grasses,
Belong to our gracious Sovereign,
What place is there for demons to live in?

On reading this, the demons were terrified lest they should be punished by Heaven for serving a wicked man in defiance of a merciful legitimate prince, and at once fled the country. Thus deserted, Chikata was soon vanquished.

[1](#) Famous pine grove on the Bay of Ise near the city of Tsu which was wiped out by an earthquake in the fifteenth century.

[2](#) Quoted from the Kwannon chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. A more literal translation of the Chinese version would be: "When, imperilled by spells or poisons a person invokes the saving power of Kwannon, he shall find these evils falling back on to the head of the evil-doer."

SANEMORI



OLD MAN What if my feeble legs move slow;
Like Paradise,
The temple is “not far from here!”
Namu Amida Butsu!

—Part I, scene 3.

INTRODUCTION

Sanemori, like *Tamura*, belongs to the group of *Asura* plays, but departs from most of them in having an old man for its hero.

Saitō-Bettō-Sanemori, who belonged to the Fujiwara clan and was descended from illustrious ancestry, was born in Echizen Province (A.D. 1111). At first he sided with the Genji, but later, went over to the Heike and became one of their famous military leaders. He served Taira-no-Koremori, Commander of the Heike army, which was opposing the advance of Minamoto-no-Yoshinaka,¹ and was defeated and killed at Shinowara² in Kaga Province at the age of seventy-two. Before setting out to battle, having a premonition that he would not return alive, Sanemori requested and obtained from Munemori, chief of the Heike clan, the privilege of wearing a red-brocade robe granted only to generals. Another circumstance which has made his last fight famous was that he dyed his grey hair raven-black in order to look youthful. Though in skill, agility and bravery he rivalled the younger warriors, he was finally unhorsed by his opponent, who cut off his head.

Although two centuries have passed since his death on the battle-field of Shinowara when the play opens, the spirit of Sanemori is still unsaved and haunts the battle-field where he tried in vain to engage in single combat with Lord Kiso, the enemy commander-in-chief. A travelling Buddhist priest-Yugyō Shōnin¹ who is passing through the district, happens to visit Shinowara, where he spends some days preaching and praying with the villagers. Attracted by the chanting of prayers, Sanemori appears in the shape of an old rustic who listens in rapt attention to the priest's sermons. Noticing him, the priest asks him who he is and having learned his story, performs special rites for the repose of Sanemori's tormented spirit by virtue of which he is able at last to be reborn in the Western Paradise.

In this play, the author deftly links up the hero's tale of the battle (*katari*) and the episode of the red-brocade robe (*kuse*), with the circumstantial narrative of his attempted attack on Lord Kiso and his death at the hands of a follower of the latter (*rongi*).

The chief merit of the play lies in the beauty of the speeches delivered by the majestic white-haired Sanemori, to the accompaniment of appropriate singing and dancing. At the same time they possess an inner significance in that they form part of the warrior's confession, without which he cannot experience the spiritual conversion required before he can reap the fruits of Amida Buddha's great vow: "Let Amida's name be once invoked and unfathomed sin shall melt away."²

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: *Heike Monogatari* (Tale of the Heike) and contemporary local traditions.

SANEMORI

Persons

PRIEST (THE VERY REVEREND TAAMI YUGYŌ SHNŌIN)	<i>Waki</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	<i>Waki-zure</i>
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>kyōgen</i>
OLD MAN	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
GHOST OF SAITŌ-BETTŌ-SANEMORI	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two

Place

Shinowara, Kaga Province

Season

Summer

PART ONE

1

The PRIEST, followed by TWO ATTENDANTS, appears and crosses the Bridgeway. They wear pointed hoods, small-checked under-kimonos, broad-sleeved robes, and white broad divided skirts. Advancing on to the Waki Seat, the PRIEST sits on a stool, while the ATTENDANTS sit on the floor beside him. After a short interval, the MAN OF THE PLACE enters and stands by the Shite Pillar. He wears a check-patterned kimono, sleeveless robe and trailing divided skirt.

MAN OF THE PLACE

The person who is speaking is an inhabitant of Shinowara. Now the Very Reverend Taami Yugyō Shōnin XIV is staying here and delivering moving sermons to grateful multitudes. About noon he begins to commune aloud with himself each day to the wonderment of the people, who variously comment among themselves upon his strange behaviour. Since it is my duty to wait upon this holy man, I have been asked to request him to explain it. To-day, shortly after noon, I shall go to him and make bold to question him. If any of you happen to hear him talking to himself, please let me know. Let this be clearly understood!

Turns and goes to the Kyōgen Seat.

2

PRIEST Beyond ten billion Buddha-lands¹
sashi Lies Amida's Western Paradise;
Long is the way a ghost must tread
Ere it may be reborn therein.
Yet if Amida dwell within our hearts,
This very place is Paradise.
Voices of prayer arise From folk of high and
low degree.



ATTENDANTS Day after day, both morn and eve,
Crowds flock to listen to the Law:

PRIEST Truly, who is there whom Buddha's Vow

ATTENDANTS Of Universal Salvation

PRIEST Does not embrace?

PRIEST and ATTENDANTS

age-uta "Within himself,
Upon Amida's name each one will ponder,
Upon Amida's name each one will ponder,
When he departs from the Place of Law."¹
In Amida's net
Caught are both wise and foolish.
Upon the boat of Buddha's Law,
Wise and foolish, all would I bear

Unto the shores of that Blessed Land.
This is the "Easy Way,"²
This is the "Easy Way."

3

While the foregoing lines are being chanted the OLD MAN appears and advances along the Bridge-way to the First Pine. He wears a 'smiling old man' mask, 'old man' wig, plain kimono and broad-sleeved robe.

OLD MAN "Bathed in the glory of the westering
sashi sun,
Voices of angel-pipes
Float from yon solitary cloud,
Which bears the heavenly host
To welcome the departing soul."³
O blessed vision! A purple cloud
To-day again hovers above this place.



Turns towards the stage and joins his hands in prayer.

I hear the sound of gongs and prayers; the sermon will soon begin. I am so age-worn that my limbs ache whether I sit or stand. Though I am too feeble to enter the temple, at least I can stand outside and listen to the sermon as best I may.

Though Amida's saving vow shines dazzlingly
On him who once invokes his name,
I cannot yet perceive
The glory of the Law,
My eyes being dim with age.
What if my feeble legs move slow;
Like Paradise,
The temple is "not far from here!"¹
Namu Amida Butsu!



Entering the stage, and sitting down by the Shite Pillar and turning towards the PRIEST, joins his hands in prayer.

PRIEST Come now, old man! You are never absent from the daily service; I can see you are a devout believer. But as others cannot see you, they wonder to whom I am speaking and what I am saying. Please tell me your name to-day.

OLD MAN Your request is most unexpected. I am a yokel living in this remote corner of the land; if I were a person of any importance, I would tell you my name. Since your holiness's coming to this place, it seems to me as if Buddha himself had come to save my soul, and I say to myself,

A lucky man indeed am I
To have seen this age

In which the 'Invocation of the Name' is taught.

Like the eyeless turtle¹
Who alights at sea upon a floating plank,
Or like the lucky man
Who sees the *udambara*² burst into bloom,
My bliss is greater than my years can bear,
And tears of joy drench these sleeves.
Filled with joy unspeakable
That, now, even this man
May hope to be reborn in Paradise,
Am I loath again to utter
The name I once bore
In this world of attachment and transmigration.

PRIEST Indeed, what you say is very reasonable; yet revealing who you are may, in truth, lead you to confess and be converted. Now without more ado tell me your name.

OLD MAN Must I then reveal my name?

PRIEST Indeed you must. Do so at once.

OLD MAN Pray bid the others leave your presence, and I shall then draw near you and tell you who I am.

PRIEST They cannot see your shape, but, if you wish, I'll have them leave me. Draw closer and speak your name.

OLD MAN As you must have heard tell, many years ago Saitō-Bettō-Sanemori of Nagai¹ was killed in battle here at Shinowara.

Approaches the centre of the stage and sits on the floor.

PRIEST I know he was a warrior of the Heike clan, a famous captain. But at present I do not want to hear the tale of the battle. Just tell me your name.



OLD MAN Wait! You will soon see why. It is said that the locks and beard of Sanemori's severed head were washed in the pond before you. Perhaps because his spirit still clings to this place, the folk hereabouts say they sometimes see him haunting it like a ghost.

PRIEST What? You mean his ghost still appears?

OLD MAN "The cherry-tree mingling with other trees upon the mountain-side

Betrays itself at flowering time."²

So 'tis with this old tree.

PRIEST How wonderful!

Methought I was listening to the ancient tale of Sanemori,
But now indeed, I see 'Twas yours.

Are you then the very ghost of Sanemori?



OLD MAN Yes, I am Sanemori's ghost.

While the ethereal part of my soul is in the world of gloom, the sensuous part lingers on earth,¹

PRIEST And in this world of bondage

OLD MAN Has lived more than two hundred years,

PRIEST But still remains unsaved.

As Shinowara Pond

OLD MAN Day and night is stirred by ceaseless ripples,

PRIEST So the darkened soul

OLD MAN Is tossed by thoughts

PRIEST 'Twixt dream

OLD MAN And waking.

age-uta Like hoar-frost on the withered grass

My locks and beard are white with age,

CHORUS "My locks and beard are white with age,

And since this shape is temporarily assumed,
I would not others see them,
Nor that my name be noised abroad,



The OLD MAN rises.

Lest rumour's tongue again put me to shame"—
Thus leaving the holy presence,
He moves away, but as he nears
The pond of Shinowara
See! Phantom-like he fades from sight,
See! Phantom-like he fades from sight.

The OLD MAN goes out.

INTERLUDE

The MAN OF THE PLACE approaches the Shite Pillar and asks the PRIEST to explain the meaning of the strange words he has been saying to himself. At the latter's request the Man tells the story of SAITŌ BETTŌ-SANEMORI'S last battle and death, whereupon the PRIEST informs him that the ghost of the warrior has appeared and conversed with him, and that he proposes to hold prayers for his salvation. After exhorting the people not to fail to attend and requesting a large attendance, the MAN goes out.

PART TWO

1

PRIEST Let us hold special prayers¹
For the sake of the ghost that haunts this place.

The PRIEST and the ATTENDANTS rise.

PRIEST and ATTENDANTS

Go to the centre of the stage.

machi-utai By Shinowara Pond we invoke the Name,
By Shinowara Pond we invoke the Name,
Utterly trusting in its saving power.
Steadily as the moon pursues her westward course,
We raise pure voices from first watch until dawn.
Our spirits yearn for the Western Paradise,
As striking the silver-voiced gongs,
Throughout the night

PRIEST We call upon the Name.
Namu Amida Butsu!
Namu Amida Butsu!

The PRIEST sits down and joins his hands in prayer.

Rises and returns to the Waki Seat followed by the ATTENDANTS who sit down.

2

While the entrance music deha is being played, the GHOST OF SANEMORI appears and crosses the Bridge-way and stands by the Shite Pillar. He wears a 'smiling old man' mask, tall black cap, long white-hair wig, white head-band, heavy silk kimono, gold-brocade robe, divided skirt and sword.

SANEMORI Who can describe how man's heart rejoices,
When he forever leaves this world of woe,
This ancient realm of change,
And gains the land of utmost bliss!¹
Then, so they tell,
His is the land whence there is no return,
His is Buddha's deathless life!²
A blessed hope springs up in me!
He who without cease repeats the saving prayer



CHORUS Shall as ceaselessly dwell in Paradise.

SANEMORI "'Namu,'

CHORUS I surrender myself to Buddha;

SANEMORI 'Amida,'

CHORUS Good deeds.

By virtue, therefore, of those words

SANEMORI Never shall believer fail
To win Amida's Paradise"³

CHORUS O blessed words!

Facing the PRIEST, Sanemori joins his hands.

3

PRIEST O marvel! See! Across the pond,
Shimmering in the owlet light,
Comes gliding that old man of yesterday,
But see, O wonder! he is clad in armour.

SANEMORI Like a dead tree sunk in the slime,
Utterly forgotten by the world,
I dwell among the *Asuras*,
Enduring pains too horrible to tell.
O save me from my woe!

PRIEST You stand before me; I hear your words,
Unheard, unseen of all,

SANEMORI Save by Your Reverence.

PRIEST The snows of yester-year still linger

SANEMORI Upon the locks and beard of the old warrior,

PRIEST Attired in splendid robes.

SANEMORI In the unclouded light

PRIEST Of the setting moon,

SANEMORI In the light of the tapers,

CHORUS Shimmers his rich brocade,

age-uta Shimmers his rich brocade.

His armour is joined by green silk braid,
His sword and dagger are enchased with gold.
But little does this grandeur profit one,
Who rather craves a Lotus-Seat
In the Lake of Treasure.¹

In truth, the Way in which we trust,
Like gold untarnished will endure forever.
The oft-repeated golden words²
Will surely bear you safe to Paradise,



Will surely bear you safe to Paradise!

4

SANEMORI "Invoke but once Amida's Name,
kuri And every sin will melt away."¹

Moves to the centre of the stage and sits on a stool.

CHORUS From earthly things
Turn aside your mind,
Aspire to the Buddha-land,
And free yourself from all attachments!

SANEMORI To-night the time has come
sashi To enter the Way most hard to find.

CHORUS Though I may seem attachment-bound,
Yet do I make confession as I tell my end
Like to a drop of dew
Upon the grassy plain of Shinowara.

SANEMORI The battle of Shinowara is lost and Tezuka-
katari no-Tarō-Mitsumori, a Genji warrior, comes into the presence
of Lord Kiso and says, "I have grappled with a strange fellow
and cut off his head. He cannot have been a general, for he
had no follower, nor can he be a mere soldier for he was
wearing a brocade robe. Again and again I urged him to
declare his name but he refused. His speech was that of a
Kwantō-man." Then Lord Kiso exclaims: "Alas! He must be
Saitō-Bettō-Sanemori of Nagai. But stay! His locks and beard
should be white, and these are raven-black. How strange!
Higuchi-no-Jirō knew him well. Summon him hither!" Higuchi
comes, takes one look at the severed head and amid flowing
tears, cries out:

"O what a cruel sight!
'Tis certain this is Saitō-Bettō.
Sanemori was wont to tell us,
"If I, a man of more than sixty years,
Again should go to war,
'Twould ill become my age



To vie with younger warriors
And be the first to charge the foe;
Yet I would not be an age-worn warrior
Despised of all.
So dyeing black my locks and beard,
In youthful guise I'll fight and die!
In truth he dyed his hair.
Let some one wash this head and prove it!"
Scarce has he spoken
Than taking: up the head,



Rises from the stool and goes through the action of picking up the head.

CHORUS He quits the presence of his lord
And kneels beside the rippling pond,
Where mirrored lie

SANEMORI goes to the front of the stage.

The weeping willow's green-clad branches.
age-uta "The weather's clearing, and the breeze
Combs the young tresses of the willow-trees;
The water's free from ice, and the
waves
Wash the beard of lake-shore
moss."¹
And as he laves the locks and beard,
The dye is washed away,
And they regain their ancient
whiteness.
The warrior jealous of his renown
Should like Sanemori strive to keep it stainless.
"O what a noble warrior!" Exclaim those present, shedding
tears.



SANEMORI kneels and goes through the action of washing the head.

kuse 'Twas not for vanity
I wore this red brocade robe.

Leaving Miyako, I told Lord Munemori;
"The proverb says,

SANEMORI *dances while the following lines are chanted.*

'A man should go back to his birth-place in
brocade.'¹

I am a native of Echizen,
But during the past years,
While steward of your fief,
I lived at Nagai in Musashi Province.

Now I set out northward
Prepared to die in battle.

It I may wear a robe of scarlet silk,
It will indeed make death beautiful."

On hearing this request my lord
Bestowed on me a robe of red brocade,

SANEMORI Quoting that proverb, the ancient poem says,
"When, brushing crimson leaves aside,

CHORUS Homeward I wend,
The folk will say,

'Lo, he comes back clad in brocade.'²
In ancient times

'Tis said that Shubaishin³ of Kwaikai
Wore a brocade robe

With flowing sleeves;
Clad in red brocade

Sanemori left undying memory of his valour
Upon the battle-field in North Japan.

Throughout this moonlit night
Till dawn I shall confess my deeds.



CHORUS Yes, make full confession of your deeds,
rongi Cleansing the waters of your mind
From all impurities.

Accompanies the chanting of the following lines by rhythmic movements suggesting a battle.

SANEMORI Evil attachments long have bound me
To the *Asura* world,
And returning here,
Regret still burns within me
That, when I tried to grapple Kiso,
The fellow Tezuka stood between.

CHORUS From out their ranks the followers of Kiso
Come forth and challenge me to battle;
Each declaring his name;
The first...

SANEMORI Tezuka-no-Tarō-Mitsumori.

CHORUS Seeing his master's danger,

SANEMORI One of his men spurs his horse
between us

CHORUS And dares to grapple with me.

SANEMORI "O lucky fellow, thou hast met
The bravest warrior in the land!"
On to my pommel I bore him down,
Severed his head, and cast it from me.

CHORUS Then Tezuka-no-Tarō
Drew near me on the left.
Twice he thrust his sword under the tasset.
We grappled and, together locked,
Crashed to the ground between the horses.

SANEMORI Alas for the old warrior!

CHORUS Utterly spent with fighting,
Like a dying tree storm-smitten;
Crushed under Tezuka,
No strength to rise again,
I lay, until his men
Rallying around cut off my head.
Thus at Shinowara I returned to dust,
Leaving no trace behind,
Leaving no trace behind.



Namu Amida Butsu!
O say for me the holy prayers,
O say for me the holy prayers!

SANEMORI turns towards the "PRIEST, joins his hands and stamps twice on the stage.

Footnotes

[1](#) Born in 1154 and dying in 1184, he was a cousin-german of Yoritomo, first shogun of Japan. His father (Yoshikata) was killed when he was two years old. At that time Yoritomo, taking pity on the orphan, had him secretly conveyed to the house of his nurse in the Kiso Mountains in Shinano Province where he was brought up, on account of which he came to be known as Kiso Yoshinaka. In 1180 in answer to Prince Mochihito's request that the Genji should attack the Heike, Yoshinaka rallied together the local Genji troops, while Yoritomo did the same in the Tōkaidō provinces. Rapidly increasing in numbers both armies converged on Miyako, one advancing along the Japan Sea, the other along the Pacific coast. After dealing the enemy a crushing defeat, Yoshinaka entered Miyako, which had been hastily evacuated by the Heike. The victory soon stirred up bitter rivalry between the two Genji generals and finally led to open war. The battle in which Sanemori lost his life took place during Yoshinaka's advance on Miyako.

[2](#) Village in Kaga Province, adjoining Sanemori's native province, Echizen, both situated on the Japan Sea.

[1](#) Priest of the Ji sect of Jōdo-kyō (Pure Land Buddhism), founded by Ippen Shōnin in 1272. The Yūgyō Shōnin in question was the fourteenth head of the sect. The name, meaning 'travelling priest,' is the common title given to the chief priest of the sect because his main duty is to travel continuously all over the country, propagating the tenets of the sect. Taami, the other name mentioned in the *dramatis personae*, is also a title assumed by successive heads of the sect. The present priest's proper name is not given.

[2](#) See p. 51, note 1.

[1](#) The *Amitabha Sutra* (smaller Sukhavatu vyuha) opens with the words, "Westward from here, beyond ten billion Buddha-lands, there is a world called the 'Highest Happiness.'"

[1](#) Quoted from a poem by Ippen Shōnin.

[2](#) As opposed to the "hard way" through self-discipline and good works preached by other Buddhistic sects. The "easy way," taught by jōdo-kyō, only requires absolute faith in Amida and repeated invocation (*nembutsu*) of his name, by virtue of which the believer after death is received into the Western Paradise

where, seated on a Lotus-Seat in the Lake of Treasure (see p. 50, note 1) he will finally attain Buddhahood by listening to his teachings.

[3](#) Verse composed by the monk Jakushō (tenth-eleventh c.) just before he died. After serving for a time as prefect of Mikawa Province, he later renounced the world and entered a Buddhist monastery on Mt. Hiei in order to devote himself to Buddhist study and exercises. He subsequently went to China where his learning and virtue aroused the admiration and respect of the Sung emperor. He died at Hangchow at the age of seventy-three.

[1](#) In the *Kwan Muryōju-kyō* (*Amitayurdhyana: Sutra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Everlasting Life*) it is written, "Then the Universally Reverend (Sakyamuni) says to Queen Videhi, 'Dost thou know that Amida is not far from here?'"

[1](#) According to a Buddhist parable there is in a wide ocean a turtle which has no eye in its head but one in its belly and a floating plank with a hole through it. If the blind turtle should happen to find the plank, attach itself to the underside, and apply its belly-eye to the hole, he could see the sun in heaven. The parable is used to illustrate how rare it is for an unenlightened soul to learn about Buddhism.

[2](#) Mythical plant supposed to flower for a thousand years but to take a thousand years to come into bud and another thousand years before the flower opens. The flowering of the *udambara* is used as a parable illustrative of the truth expressed in the preceding parable.

[1](#) Village in Musashi Province near the present Asakusa. Sanemori lived there while serving the Genji family.

[2](#) Poem by Minamoto-no-Yorimasa, a famous Genji general, included in the *Shikashū* (1153)

[1](#) According to an ancient Chinese belief, the soul is composed of two parts—the heavenly and the earthly—partaking respectively of the *yang* and *yin* principles. After death the soul is resolved into its component parts, the ethereal one returning to heaven, and the sensuous one to earth. See also *Tōboku*, p. 88, note 3.

[1](#) 'Specified-time prayers,' that is, services performed for some purpose during a fixed period of time, such as one day, seven days or twenty-one days. The practice is still observed.

[1](#) Quoted from Eshin Sōzu's treatise entitled *Ōjō Yōshū* (Compendium on Rebirth into Paradise).

[2](#) From the same. Literally translated, the passage reads: "The place is one from which there is no retrogression. Thus the man who has attained this place has escaped from the three evil worlds and eight obstacles. The life in that land is eternal, so he shall no more taste the pains of birth, age, disease and death."

[3](#) Quotation from Shan-tao (善導), a famous Chinese priest of the T'ang dynasty. The original, literally translated, reads: "'Namu' means 'surrender myself' and also

'aspiration and dedication'; 'Amida Butsu' means 'necessary deeds.' By virtue of this interpretation of the formula, those who recite it will attain rebirth in Paradise."

1 Descriptions of this lake and other wonders of the Pure Land given in the *Amitabha Sutra* (see p. 42, note 1) and in *Ōjō Yōshū* (see p. 49, note 1) have inspired masterpieces of Buddhist religious art.

2 i.e. 'Namu Amida Butsu.'

1 Words said to occur in Eshin Sōzu's work entitled *Busshin Tōshū* and to be a quotation from the *Ōjō Hōnen Sutra*.

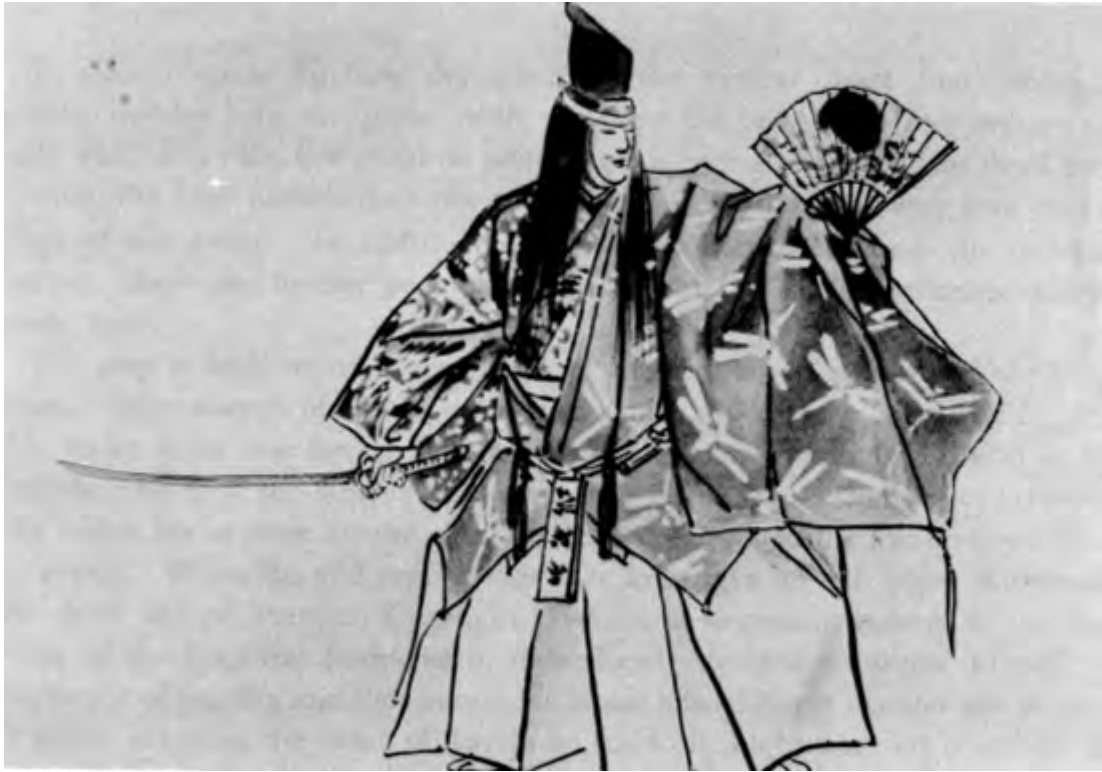
1 Couplet composed by Miyako-no-Yoshika included in the *Wakan-Rōeishū*.

1 Alludes to the ancient Chinese proverb: "If a man becomes a high official and wealthy and yet does not return to his native place, he is like one who goes abroad at night wearing a brocade dress."

2 Anonymous poem included in the *Gosenshū* (951).

3 Chinese scholar (Chu Mai-ch'en 朱買臣) who lived in the First Han dynasty. In spite of having to earn a precarious living by hawking fire-wood, he never ceased studying and is credited with reading books even while carrying on his business. His wife who could not bear poverty deserted him. Later he entered government service and was ultimately promoted prefect of Kwaikei (K'uai-chi) Province. The Emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.) who greatly respected him for his wisdom, on one occasion persuaded him to return home attired in his court robes by quoting him the previously-mentioned proverb.

KIYOTSUNE



CHORUS Now the foes advance in waves,...
—Scene 7.

INTRODUCTION

In some respects *Kiyotsune* departs from the typical *Asura* play which is usually divided into two parts, while this play has only one; furthermore the *waki* who, as a rule, is a priest on pilgrimage, is here a retainer of the dead hero. Finally, the hero himself does not perform the *kakeri* dance, a very rare case in plays of this group. In addition to such formal deviations from the standard pattern, there are further peculiarities in *Kiyotsune* to which reference will be made later.

The play is built round a very touching incident recorded in the *Heike Mono-gatari*. After a series of disastrous reverses at the hands of the Genji late in 1183, the Heike army was forced back to the northeastern corner of Kyūshū in the neighbourhood of the famous Hachiman Shrine¹ at Usa. Desiring to know the fate which lay in store for the clan, the leaders requested the god to grant them an oracle. When the god replied that they must give up all hope, Kiyotsune, the third son of Taira-no-Shigemori,² who was lieutenant-general of the Left Wing of the Imperial Body-guard, immediately decided to throw himself on the mercy of Buddha and thus ensure his future bliss. Eager to enter the Western Paradise, invoking the name of Amida he leapt one night from his boat into the sea and drowned himself. Subsequently a lock of his hair was discovered in the boat apparently cut off by him and left as a keepsake for his wife in Miyako, which his faithful retainer, Awazu-no-Saburō, took upon himself to deliver.

The feelings of mingled sorrow and resentment aroused in Kiyotsune's wife by the news of her husband's suicide, lead up to a moving scene between her and the ghost of Kiyotsune which appears to her in a dream. The play ends with a remarkable dance performed by Kiyotsune's ghost in which he evokes the strife-torn world of the *Asuras* described by the chorus. In answer to his tenfold

invocation of Amida¹ at the time of his death Kiyotsune, purified at last from all thoughts of hate, enters the Western Paradise by virtue of the saving vow of Amida.

The main theme of the present drama might perhaps best be described as the strife of love and death in a dream. These two motives not only dominate, but provide the main dramatic interest, which is further enhanced by the tragic historical events which destroyed the wedded happiness of Kiyotsune's wife who was separated from her husband, first by the war and then by his wilful and seemingly unnecessary suicide. The play also develops not less clearly but with greater subtlety than other Noh plays the underlying Buddhistic theme that it is only through faith in the Great Vow of Amida that man can escape rebirth and achieve ultimate blessedness.

As regards its production, the following points are worth noting because of their dramatic significance. At the beginning of the dream the *waki* (Awazu-no-Saburo), instead of leaving the stage by the Bridgeway, as is customary, retires through the Sliding Door. When the *shite* (Kiyotsune) appears in his wife's dream towards the end of the scene, he enters softly while the chorus is singing, thus indicating the passage from reality to dream. The *tsure* (Kiyotsune's wife) remains on the stage throughout the performance, while the *waki*, contrary to the general practice in most Noh plays, only appears in the earlier part. In the later scenes only two persons are on the stage, the *tsure* (who never moves from the *Waki* Seat) and the *shite*. Since the latter is really a dream figure existing only in the wife's imagination and not a real ghost, the whole play may be regarded, in effect, as a one-person play. Finally, the absence of the *kyōgen* is due to the fact that, apart from its being a one-act play, a comic interlude would introduce a discordant note and destroy the emotional tension created by the dream-scene.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: *Gempei Seisuiki* (History of the Rise and Fall of the Genji and the Heike), Vol. XXXIII: 'Episode of Kiyotsune's Suicide'; *Heike Monogatari* (Tale of the

Heike), Vol. VIII: 'The Heike's Evacuation from the Dazaifu.'

KIYOTSUNE

Persons

WIFE OF KIYOTSUNE	<i>Tsure</i>
AWAZU-NO-SABURŌ	<i>Waki</i>
GHOST OF KIYOTSUNE	<i>Shite</i>

Place

Hiding-place of Kiyotsune's wife in Miyako

Season

Late autumn

WIFE OF KIYOTSUNE *appears on the Bridgeway and advancing across it, enters the stage and sits on the Waki Seat. She wears a tsure mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono and brocade outer-kimono.*

1

While the entrance music shidai is being played, AWAZU-NO-SABURŌ appears, crosses the Bridgeway and stops by the Shite Pillar. He wears a striped kimono, kake-suō robe, white broad divided skirt, short sword, mushroom hat and amulet-bag hanging from his neck.

AWAZU Crossing the surges of the eightfold sea,
shidai Crossing the surges of the eightfold sea,
 I must return to where the Court
 Stands within its nine gates.¹

CHORUS Crossing the surges of the eightfold sea,
jidori I must return to where the Court

Stands within its nine gates.

AWAZU I am a retainer of the late Kiyotsune, Lieutenant-General of the Left Wing of the Imperial Body-guard. Awazu-no-Saburō is my name. My late master was defeated in the battles in Tsukushi,² and since his retreat to Miyako was cut off, he probably preferred to take his own life rather than perish at the hands of the common soldiery no better than wayside weeds. So, late one moonlit night, he plunged from his boat into the sea off the coast of Yanagi.³ Later, when searching the boat, I found a lock of hair he had left behind him as a keepsake. Having undeservedly escaped with my life, I am now carrying this keepsake to his wife in Miyako.



michi-yuki In recent years

I have lived a country life,
I have lived a country life.
My heart is filled with sadness,
Since, when I return,
Miyako's glorious springtide no more will greet
me.



Past is mournful autumn,
And the wintry rain
Beats down upon my dress.
Grieving at my unhappy fate,
My sleeves are drenched with tears,
As in disguise my journey I pursue,
As in disguise my journey I pursue.

Travelling in haste, I have quickly reached Miyako.

Retiring to the Stage-attendants' Seat, removes his mushroom hat and slipping the amulet-bag inside the fold of his kimono, moves to the Shite Pillar.

2

AWAZU A visitor is announcing his arrival. It is Awazu-no-Saburō just come from Tsukushi. Please announce him.

Turns towards the Waki Seat.

WIFE What? Is it you, Awazu-no-Saburō? You need not be announced. Pray enter. What message do you bring me from my lord?

Kneeling in the centre of the stage, and placing both hands on the floor, makes a deep obeisance.

AWAZU A message I am loath to deliver to my lady.

WIFE A message you are loath to deliver? Has my lord perchance renounced the world?

AWAZU No, he has not renounced the world.

WIFE I have heard he has come safely through the recent battles in Tsukushi.

AWAZU Yes, my lady, he has come safely through the recent battles in Tsukushi. But since his way to Miyako was cut off, my lord thought to put an end to his own life rather than lose it at the hands of nameless soldiery no better than wayside weeds and while we were off the coast of Yonagi in Buzen Province, late one moonlit night, he leapt overboard and was drowned.



WIFE What! You mean he cast himself into the sea?

Never can I forgive him such an end!
Had he in battle perished
Or died of illness,
I could resign myself to fate;
But that he himself should seek
A watery grave
Proves all his vows
Were lying words.
Oh! Woe is me,
Naught's left me in this world
Save my vain rancour against my lord!

CHORUS How dream-like now appear

sage-uta Our wedded joys!

age-uta Through all these troubled years¹

I've hid from prying eyes,
I've hid from prying eyes—

My sobs voiceless as the rustle of *susuki* grass²
Swayed by autumn winds
In the hedge round my dwelling.
From whom need I to-day conceal my grief?
Like to the cuckoo³
Crying until the moon-beams
Grow pale in the dawn sky,
Freely and openly I'll weep,
Freely and openly I'll weep!

AWAZU Later I searched the boat and found this lock of my lord's hair left you as a keepsake. Pray gaze on it and soothe your grieving heart.

Places the amulet-bag on his fan and offers it to KIYOTSUNE's wife, who takes it.

WIFE Is this the raven lock of my late lord?
My eyes are blinded,
My spirit longs for its release
And ever stronger grows my yearning.
"Each time I look upon this lock
Grief tears at my heart;
I bid it hence return
Unto my sorrow's fountain-head."¹



CHORUS As she repeats these lines,
sage-uta The keepsake she returns
And seeks her couch.
All through the night
Tears of longing fall,
The while she prays that he may come to her
If but in dream.
sleepless, in vain her pillow oft she shifts;
Yet ever stronger grows her longing,
Yet ever stronger grows her longing.

KIYOTSUNE's wife places the amulet-bag on the floor.

Soon after the CHORUS begins, AWAZU retires through the Sliding Door,

The GHOST OF KIYOTSUNE, who has appeared during the last chorus, advances and stands by the First Pine. He wears a chūjō mask, long blackhair wig, white head-band, tall black cap, embroidered kimono, gold-brocade robe with left shoulder uncovered, white broad divided skirt and sword.

KIYOTSUNE 'Tis said: "The sage is dream-free,"¹

sashi Yet for whom is life reality?

"A mote within the eye

May cause a man to feel

The threefold world too small;

But when his mind is free from care,

His couch seems vaster than the world."²

Past griefs are truly but illusion

And present sadness but a dream;

Which, like drifting cloud or running water,

Do pass away, leaving no trace.

O poor frail self that clings unto this world!

"Since once I saw my lover in a dream,

I've learned to trust in dreams."³

O thou whom I once loved!

Kiyotsune is here!



Advancing on to the stage, stands before his WIFE.

WIFE O wondrous marvel!

I see Kiyotsune by my pillow,

And yet I know that he has drowned himself.

How then can I behold him save in
dream?

Though but a dream,

Yet I am thankful

To see his form once more.

But since, defying heaven's decree,

You brought your life to an untimely end,

You've proved yourself untrue



And bred resentment in my breast.

KIYOTSUNE Though you reproach me for my deed,
You too are not unworthy of reproach.

Why did you spurn the keepsake I left to ease your pain?

WIFE No! No! Why I did so
Is set forth in a poem
Which scarce conveys
How deep the sight of it did stir me.
“Each time I look upon this lock,
Grief tears at my heart;
I bid it hence return

KIYOTSUNE Unto my sorrow's fountain-head.”

Unless you had grown weary of my love, you should have
treasured the gift I took such care to leave you.

WIFE You mistake my reason:
You meant the keepsake as a comfort,
But as I look upon that lock
My mind becomes unruly like my hair.

KIYOTSUNE Since you have spurned my gift and rendered vain my
thoughtful care, I cannot forgive your cruelty.

WIFE Nor I your wilful death.

KIYOTSUNE One taunts the other with reproaches,

WIFE The other tauntingly replies.

KIYOTSUNE The keepsake is a source of woe.

WIFE And a lock of hair

CHORUS Becomes for us a source of strife,

age-uta Becomes for us a source of strife.

To-night the two lie side by side,
Each head pillowed on the other's arm,
Wet by tears of anger;
Estranged by anger, though in body joined,
Sadly they lie as if they slept alone.
“The keepsake brings new agony,
Recalls afresh to the bereaved
The loss she had else forgot,”¹
And makes salt tears to flow,



And makes salt tears to flow.

Both weep.

4

KIYOTSUNE Listen while I tell you what befell me in the days gone by, and forget your grievance.

Advances to the centre, and sits down on a stool.

sashi Hearken to me!
We chanced to learn
The foe was marching through Kyūshū
Against our castle in Yamaga.²
Dismayed, in haste we took to barges,
Plying our oars the long night through,
And reached Yanagi in Buzen Province.



CHORUS Where, as its name bespeaks,
An avenue of willows lines the sea-front;
Here rude buildings were put up
To house the Imperial Court.

KIYOTSUNE Then we were told
The Emperor would invoke Hachiman
At Usa Shrine;

CHORUS Thither a store of gold and silver
And countless precious gifts,
And seven steeds sacred to the god,
Were brought as offerings to the Lord of War.¹

WIFE Though you may think I still reproach you,
Was it not a rash and foolish deed
To cast away your life before the time,
While yet you knew not
The fate awaiting the Emperor and the Heike clan?

KIYOTSUNE Truly you would be right,
Had not the sacred oracle declared
Our cause past hope.
But pray, hear me to the end!

CHORUS How while the Emperor and his court
Were keeping vigil at the shrine,
Offering up prayers and making vows,
Behind the curtain of brocade
That hangs before the holy place,
A voice divine proclaimed,—

KIYOTSUNE “No power hath the God of Usa
To change man's hateful fate on earth!
What serves it then to urge Him further?”

CHORUS “Now the last hope
Grows faint as insects' dying song;
Forlorn indeed is autumn's eve!”²

5

KIYOTSUNE Alas! Gods and Buddhas

CHORUS Both forsake our cause.
All confidence and spirit lost,
Like a rumbling cart
The Emperor we follow to his quarters.
O woeful sight!



KIYOTSUNE leaves the stool and dances while the following lines are chanted.

kuse Meanwhile we learn
The foe is marching into Nagato Province.
Once more we embark,
Wretched indeed our plight!
Life is an ever-changing dream,
And those who once in the Hōgen era¹
Rioted like flowers in spring,
Now, in the Juei autumn,²
Alas, are scattered
Like sere and yellow leaves
Over the waves,
Each leaf, a boat.
Snowy-crested billows



Urged by the autumn wind from Yanagi
Are like a pursuing host.
A glimpse of herons caught
Amidst the distant pines
Makes their spirit quail,
Thinking they might be
The snow-white pennants of the Genji host.
Now as I ponder deeply
Wherefore Hachiman;'s fateful words
Run ever in my head,
I, Kiyotsune, call to mind
That in the head of an upright man
God dwells.³



KIYOTSUNE I feel 'twould be but foolishness
To save the dew-drop of my foredoomed life,

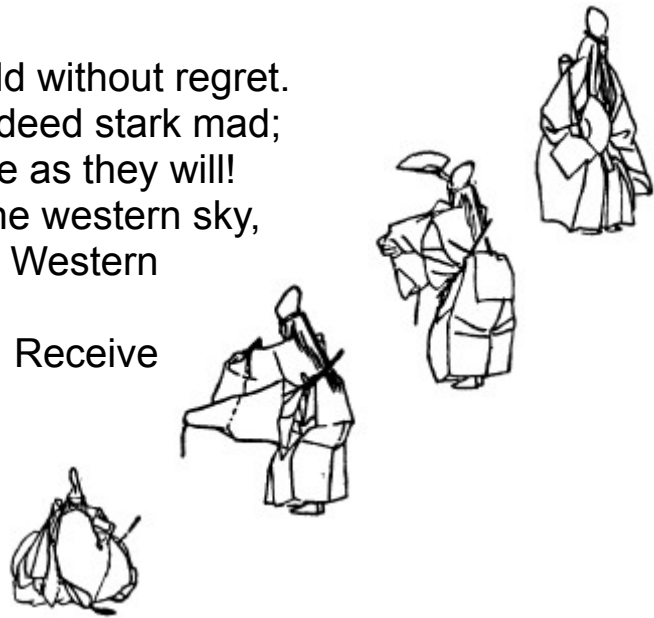
CHORUS As though it could endure.
Rather than trust to any boat
Floating like seaweed to and fro,
A prey to endless sorrow,
Like to a water-fowl
I'll dive into the sea,
And so end my life.



Keeping my own counsel
I stand and wait
Upon the bow-planks
While the autumn moon
Grows pale in the dawning sky.
Drawing forth my flute,
I blow a few clear silvery notes,
Then sing *imayō*¹ songs
And chant some ancient verses.
Musing upon the past and future,
Well do I see that soon or late,
The glorious past forgot,
The present full of woe,
Perish I must



Like surf upon the shore.
Our life is but a travail
And I can quit this world without regret.
Others may deem my deed stark mad;
Well, let them judge me as they will!
The moon descends the western sky,
I'll follow her to the Western
Paradise.
Namu Amida Butsu! Receive
my spirit!
Thus praying,
overboard I leap
And sink down to the
oozy bottom of the
sea.
So pitifully ends my
woeful life!



KIYOTSUNE sinks weeping by the Shite Pillar.

6

WIFE Hearing your tale, my mind is mazed;
 Sobs shake me
 And hot tears fall.
 O tragic ending to our wedded life!

Weeps.

KIYOTSUNE How true the saying,
 "Once fallen in the pit
 The selfsame grievous lot
 Awaits all men."¹

7

KIYOTSUNE Where'er I turn
 In the *Asura* world,

Rises and dances while the following lines are chanted.

CHORUS Where'er I turn
In the *Asura* world,
The trees are foes,
Arrows the falling rain,
Sharp swords strew the ground,
The hills are iron castles,
The clouds are battle-pennants,
Enemies thrust with their proud blades,

KIYOTSUNE *draws his sword.*

Hate flashing in their eyes.
Here all is strife:
Anger and lust,
Greed and ignorance
Strive against the Holy Way;
Blind attachment and Buddha-nature
Grapple together.¹
Now the foes advance in waves,
Now like the ebbing tide retreat.
The battles of Shikoku and Kyūshū
Endlessly are fought again
Till, now at last, these torments
cease.
Relying utterly upon the Barque of
Holy Law,



KIYOTSUNE *throws down his sword.*

The dying Kiyotsune uttered the
tenfold prayer:
Kiyotsune, the 'Pure'-hearted,
Kiyotsune, the 'Pure'-hearted
Now enters the Western Paradise.
Praised be Amida!



KIYOTSUNE *stamps twice on the stage at the Shite Seat,*

Footnotes

[1](#) Ancient Shinto shrine in Buzen Province, Kyūshū, dedicated to the Emperor Ōjin. In the ninth century, in accordance with an oracle, another shrine was built near Kyoto known as Otoko-yama Hachiman, which came to be especially revered by the Genji as the shrine of their patron deity just as that on Miyajima in the Inland Sea was by the Heike clan.

[2](#) Unlike his father Kiyomori who was a typical dictator, Shigemori was righteous, merciful and refined, and tried to restrain his father's policy of violence. After his son's death at a comparatively early age, Kiyomori gave full rein to his inordinate lust for power which ultimately led to the downfall of the family.

[1](#) According to the tenets of the Amidist sects prevalent in those days, tenfold repetition just before death of the formula 'Namu Amida Butsu' (I put all my faith in Amida Buddha) had the power to ensure the immediate rebirth into the Western Paradise.

[1](#) See *Tamura*, p. 24, note 1.

[2](#) Ancient name for Kyūshū now rarely used.

[3](#) Town on the eastern coast of Buzen Province.

[1](#) Allusion to the period following the abandonment of Miyako by the Heike in the autumn of 1183 and its occupation by the Genji troops. At that time Kiyotsune's wife was forced by her parents to remain in Miyako instead of following her lord into the west. The death of Kiyotsune took place three years later.

[2](#) *Miscanthus sinensis*: wild grass somewhat resembling pampas grass and found all over Japan. It reaches five or six feet in height, and in autumn puts forth tassel-like flowers.

[3](#) *I.e. hototogisu, the Japanese species of the cuckoo genus which comes to Japan from the south in late spring and leaves in autumn. Unlike its Western relative, its cry consists of several notes instead of two and is often heard at night.*

[1](#) The original contains a number of pivot-words which baffle any attempt at literal translation, such as "tsukushi" (to grieve or place-name), "kami" (hair or god) and "usa" (grief or the Shinto shrine of that name. Cf. p. 59).

[1](#) Quotation from Ta-hui Sung-kao (大慧宋杲) (1089-1163), a Chinese monk of the Zen sect. The same saying in a slightly altered form is traceable to Chuang-tse (莊子).

[2](#) Quoted from a Chinese poem by Musō Kokushi (1275-1351), a Japanese monk of the Zen sect,

[3](#) Poem by Ono-no-Komachi included in the *Kokinshū*,

[1](#) Anonymous poem included in the *Kokinshū*.

[2](#) Situated in Chikuzen Province. The Heike when forced to abandon their base at the Dazaifu were given an asylum by the local lord in this castle.

[1](#) Emperor Ōjin who, as Hachiman, God of War, is still regarded as the tutelary deity of warriors.

[2](#) Poem by Fujiwara-no-Shunzei included in the *Senzaishū*

[1](#) During this era (1156-1158) the Heike took over the political ascendancy previously enjoyed by the Fujiwara nobles.

[2](#) Autumn of 1183. See p. 6, note 1. The Heike took with them the young Emperor, nephew of Munemori, head of the clan.

[3](#) Supposed to have been the vow made by Hachiman, meaning that he would always guide and protect a just man.

[1](#) Song consisting of eight alternating lines of seven and five syllables, first invented and very popular throughout the Heian period (794-1184).

[1](#) It is said that when Nichizō Shōnin (886-985), a monk of the Hossō sect, visited Hell guided by Bodhisattva Zao, he saw the Emperor Daigo, famed for his benevolence, being tormented in the lake of molten iron. In answer to the monk's surprised enquiry why he was there, the Emperor repeated the lines quoted.

[1](#) These five lines are a tentative translation. The original passage is so corrupt that no satisfactory interpretation has yet been reached.

TŌBOKU



CHORUS "I am
The mistress of the plum-tree."
—Part I, scene 4.

INTRODUCTION

Tōboku is a *kazura-mono*. The plays of this group contain a *jo-no-mai* dance performed to the accompaniment of hand-drums and, in some cases, a horizontal drum. In *Tōboku*, however, only hand-drums are used, the reason for this being that these hand-drums best stimulate the *yūgen*¹ mood characteristic of *kazuramono*.

The present play is designed to illustrate the romantic temperament of Lady Izumi,² a poetess endowed with rare poetic sensibility. While attached to the Lady of Shōtō-mon-in she gained considerable notoriety because of her love-affairs with several princes. The Lady of Shōtō-mon-in was by name Shōshi, daughter of Fujiwara-no-Michinaga known as the Midō-no-Kwampaku³ who exercised a dominating influence at the Heian court. Upon becoming the Emperor Ichijō's consort, Shōshi went to live in a pavilion known as the Tōboku-in on the northeastern side of the precincts of the Hojō-ji Temple situated in the northeastern quarter of Miyako where Michinaga lived. The suite of rooms occupied by Lady Izumi was at the west end of the Tōboku-in outside which she was said to have planted a plum-tree.

When the play opens many years have passed since the death of Lady Izumi and the former palace has become a temple, but her plum-tree ('Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves,') still puts forth its lovely blossoms as of old.

After death, having through her poetry attained enlightenment, she became one of the Bodhisattvas of Song and Dance in the Western Paradise. Such is the legend around which the author has built the present play. Drawn by the memory of those bygone days, Izumi's ghost appears in a vision to the travelling monk who is visiting the ancient garden of the Tōboku-in to admire and praise the 'Plum-tree-by-the Eaves,' and tells him that she has attained Buddhahood by virtue of the *Lotus Sutra*. *yūgen* pervades the latter

part of the play, reaching its highest expression in the *jo-no-mai* dance performed by the ghost of Lady Izumi.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: Unknown.

TŌBOKU

Persons

MONK FROM THE EASTLAND	<i>Waki</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	<i>Waki-zure</i>
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>kyōgen</i>
MAIDEN	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
GHOST OF LADY IZUMI	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two

Place

Tōboku-in in Miyako

Season

New Year

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the MONK FROM THE EASTLAND with TWO ATTENDANT appears and enters the stage. He wears a pointed hood, plain kimono and broad-sleeved robe. The TWO ATTENDANTS are also similarly attired.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

shidai The New Year ushers in the spring,
The New Year ushers in the spring.
Let us hasten towards flowery Miyako.

CHORUS The New Year ushers in the spring,
jidori Let us hasten towards flowery Miyako.

MONK I am an Eastland monk. As I have not yet seen Miyako, I have decided to journey thither this spring.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

michi-yuki This morning we crossed the Barrier of Mists,¹

This morning we crossed the Barrier of Mists,
While the spring haze was rising,

Wending our way across Musashi Plain;²

Leaving it far behind us,

Grossing mountain upon cloud-encircled mountain,

Hither have we come;

As we near Miyako,

The travellers' hearts rejoice,

The travellers' hearts rejoice.

MONK Travelling in haste, we have reached Miyako earlier than we expected. Look at that plum-tree in full bloom. Surely it must be a famous tree. I will ask its name from someone in the neighbourhood.

ATTENDANTS Pray do so.

They proceed to the Waki Seat and sit down.

2

MONK Is anyone about?

Turns towards the Bridgeway.

The MAN OF THE PLACE who has been sitting on the kyōgen Seat rises and approaches the First Pine. He wears a striped kimono' sleeveless robe and trailing divided skirt, and short sword.

MAN OF THE PLACE

Were you calling me? What do you want?

MONK We have come to see the sights of Miyako for the first time. I see an exceedingly beautiful plum-tree in the garden. Please tell me if it is famous.



MAN OF THE PLACE

Certainly it is. It was planted long ago by Lady Izumi and is called 'Izumi Shikibu' after her. Please look at it as long as you like.

MONK Thank you kindly for telling me. I will sit yonder and quietly enjoy its beauty.

MAN OF THE PLACE

If you need me, please call.

MONK I am much obliged.

MAN OF THE PLACE

At your service.

MONK So this is the plum-tree 'Izumi Shikibu.'
I shall sit awhile and gaze at it.

Returns to the kyōgen Seat while the Monk advances to the centre of the stage and faces the Front audience and then starts walking towards the Waki Seat.

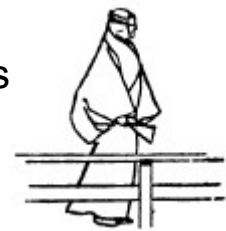
3

The MAIDEN comes out of the Mirror Room' wearing a 'young woman' mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-Kimono and brocade outer-Kimono.

MAIDEN Excuse me, reverend monk. What were you told when you enquired about the plum-tree?

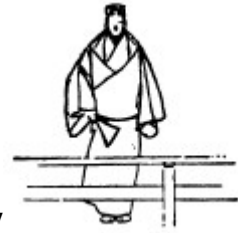
MONK Well, when I enquired, I was told that it bears the name 'Izumi Shikibu.'

Stands on the Waki Seat and faces the Maiden.



MAIDEN No. You should rather call it by such names as Kōbun-boku¹ or Ōshuku-bai.² You must not believe what an ignorant person tells you. It is said that when this temple was still the palace of the Shōtō-mon-in, Lady Izumi planted this tree and called it 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves' and never tired of gazing upon its blossoms.

Since you have the good fortune
Of seeing the marvellous blossoms,
Would you recite the *Lotus Sutra*?
Though you are not related to her,
It will help her soul.



This is the 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves' planted by
Lady Izumi.

MONK So this is the 'Plum-tree-by-the Eaves' planted by Lady
Izumi! Then here is where Lady Izumi used to live?

MAIDEN Yes, it is. Lady Izumi's rooms have been preserved
untouched to this day and always attract many visitors.

Enters the stage and stands by the Shite Pillar.

MONK How wonderful this plum-tree
That tells of her who planted it,

MAIDEN Whose scent and hue,
For love of its one-time mistress,
Yearly grow richer.

MONK Its beauty and grace

MAIDEN Still

MONK Recall her long since dead.

CHORUS Defying passing years,

age-uta This ancient 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves,'
This ancient 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves'
Is faithful to its mistress.

As whirling snow-flakes fill the sky,
So does her fame,
Borne on the wings of her flower-like fancies,
Reach unto every corner of this land.



4

CHORUS Listening to this ancient tale,
rongi I well believe all round me here
Unchanged remains,
As in the spring days now long past.

I alone feel like a stranger here¹—
MAIDEN Not you alone perhaps.
Of whom, indeed, should you enquire
Concerning past things
Save only me?
Though I am no longer of this world,
Fleeting as a dew-drop on the wayside grass,
I still dwell within this flowering tree.

CHORUS You say, you dwell among these
flowers.

But blossoms fall from branches,
Like birds seeking again their ancient
nests,

MAIDEN Returning whence they once did
come.

CHORUS Then your life's journey's ended?

MAIDEN Under the shadow of the flowers

CHORUS “I seem to rest. I am
The mistress of the plum-tree.”
Then in the sunset glow
She melts into the shadow of the tree,
She melts into the shadow of the tree.



The Maiden goes out.

INTERLUDE

The MAN OF THE PLACE *enters*. *In reply to the MONK's request, he tells him the story of the Toboku-in, of the 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves,' and the Hōjō Hall.*¹

PART TWO

1

MONK and ATTENDANTS
machi-utai All through the night

Under the 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves,'
Under the 'Plum-tree-by-the-Eaves,'
Its blossoms like the Wondrous Law²
While the moon steers
Her unerring westward course,
We chant the Holy Sutra,
We chant the Holy Sutra.

2

While the entrance music issei is being played, the GHOST OF LADY Izumi enters the stage and stands by the Shite Pillar. She wears a 'young woman' mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, dancing chōken robe and scarlet broad divided skirt.

LADY Blessed be the Sutra,
Blessed be the Sutra!

Your reading of the Book of Parables¹ brings back to my mind an incident which took place while I was still in this world. When this was still the Shōtō-mon-in, the Midō-no-Kwampaku rode by the gate in his carriage,² reciting aloud the Parables of the *Lotus Sutra*. Inside the gate, I, Shikibu, hearing it, composed this poem:



“When without the gate
I hear the 'Wheels of the Law' rolling by,
From the 'Burning House'³
I too am set free.”
Now your chanting of the Sutra
Brings that day back to me.

MONK In truth 'tis Lady Izumi's poem,
Known and repeated through the land.
Were you, as the poem says,
Truly set free from the 'Burning House?'

LADY In very truth, I was. Fled from the 'Burning House,' but by virtue of my poetry I have now become a Bodhisattva of Song and Dance,

MONK And still live in this temple,
 LADY Though saved from the 'Burning House.'
 MONK And
 LADY Now
 CHORUS Leaving the threefold world of suffering,
age-uta Crossing the threshold of the 'Burning House,'
 Borne by the 'Three Vehicles of the Law,'¹
 Lady Izumi has attained to Buddhahood.
 Let us give thanks!



3

CHORUS Poetry is indeed a sermon
kuri Preached by the 'Body-of-Law.'²
 The memory of poets alone lives on for ever,³
 So writes Ki-no-Tsurayuki.
 LADY Poetry moves the Heavens and Earth,
sashi And melts the Demon's heart.⁴
 CHORUS To her incline their ear both Gods and Buddhas;
 The verse inspired by Miyako
 Flower-decked beneath a tender sky,
 Springing from a poet's heart,
 Fulfils the 'Way of Heaven.'
kuse This holy temple guards from demon-hosts The perilous northeast
 quarter¹ of Miyako;

LADY IZUMI *dances while the following lines are chanted.*

The soothing voices of Kamo's flowing waters²
 Rising among the wooded northern hills,
 And of Shirakawa's ending none knows where,
 Sow in the mind
 The seed of rebirth in the Land of Bliss.
 Within the garden lies a brimming pond.
 "Birds nest in the islet's trees,
 A monk knocks at the moonlit gate,"³
 Through which a ceaseless stream of people flows



Apparelled in bright hues—
A sight that can alone be seen
In glorious Miyako in bloom-time.

LADY Worshippers of Buddha

Who hearken to his words,

CHORUS Come and go, morn and night,
In ever-growing multitudes.

The pine-trees
In the valley's depths
Soughing in the early
autumn breeze,
Tell us summer's ninety-



days are o'er
And that all-withering
autumn is here,

Awakening man to the 'Way of Truth.'¹

The moon, mirrored in the waters of the pond,
images the Buddha

Who, to save mankind,

Came down to earth.²

In this fair garden of Tōboku-in

Four seasons ruled by *yang* and *yin*³

Are seen in their full beauty.



4

CHORUS In the spring night,

LADY Izumi *performs a jo-no-mai dance.*

Continues to dance while the following lines are chanted.

LADY In the spring night

Darkness cannot prevail,

For the plum blossom,

CHORUS Unseen though be its hue,

Fills the night with fragrance,

Fills the night with fragrance,

Fills the night with fragrance.⁴

5

LADY Though to recall those days of yore
When, urged by hues and scents,
I was passion's slave,
CHORUS Is now unseemly,
Yet memory still makes me repine them—
I must depart
Lest strangers see my worthless tears.

LADY Fare you well!
The flower returns whence it sprang,

CHORUS Fare you well!
The flower returns whence it
sprang,
The bird returns to its old nest,¹
I too return to my old home.
Though men might think
The lamp-lit Hōjō Hall
To be the 'Burning House,'
In truth it is the Lotus-Seat,
Where now Lady Izumi dwells—
And as she glides
Within her chamber in the Hōjō Hall,
The monk awakens from his dream,
The monk awakens from his dream.



LADY IZUMI *stamps twice on the stage at the Shite Seat.*

Footnotes

¹ See General Introduction, p. xii.

² Celebrated beauty, a daughter of Oe-no-Masamune. She first married Tachibana-no-Michisada, prefect of Izumi Province, and by him had a daughter, named Lady Koshikibu, who was also a famous poetess. Having divorced shortly afterwards, Izumi fell in love with the third son of the Emperor Reizei and after his

death three years later, she became attached to his younger brother Prince Atsumichi. The course of this love-affair is related in *Lady Izumi's Diary*. After the death of her young lover, she entered the service of the Lady of Shōtō-mon-in and subsequently married Fujiwara-no-Masayasu whom she accompanied to his post in Tango Province, but later divorced. At the close of her life she became a nun in Miyako where she died.

[3](#) Literally 'emperor's chief counsellor of the temple,' so called because he built the magnificent Buddhist temple of Hōjō-ji. He served four successive emperors in the capacity of regent, chief counsellor and prime minister between 996 and 1015.

[1](#) I.e. Kasumi-ga-seki situated at Tama Village, Musashi Province. The village is on the banks of the river Tama, west of Tokyo.

[2](#) Southern part of the Kantō plain, one of the widest plains in Japan.

[1](#) 'Love-of-learning tree,' poetic name given to the plum-tree, derived from an anecdote which tells how plum-trees produced unusually beautiful blossoms during the reign of an ancient emperor of China when pursuit of learning flourished and how it ceased to do so when learning was neglected.

[2](#) 'Spring-warbler-nestling plum,' name given to a particular tree belonging to a daughter of the famous poet Ki-no-Tsurayuki, a co-editor of the *Kokinshū*. During the reign of the Emperor Murakami (947-967), a plum-tree in front of the Sovereign's residence died. The court officials, after searching far and wide for a tree to take its place, discovered one in the garden of the Ki family and demanded that it should be removed. Filled with regret for the loss of her favourite tree the daughter composed a poem, and attached it to a branch. The poem reads:

I submit to the august order
With deepest reverence,
But what shall I tell the warbler,
When it asks about its accustomed nest?

[1](#) Allusion to a poem by Ariwara-no-Nkrihira in the *Kokinshū*, which reads:

Is the moon changed?
Is spring no longer
What it was of yore,
While I remain my old self?

[1](#) 'Ten-feet-square,' a chief priest's living quarters in a Buddhist temple, named after the room of a famous lay Buddhist Wei-mo (維摩), the central figure of the *Wei-mo Sutra*. The scripture tells how when Wei-mo was ill, Buddha sent his greatest disciples to enquire after his health. Before their arrival Wei-mo, by means of his miraculous powers, enlarged his cottage to accommodate thirty-two thousand seats. Subsequently, to the wonderment of his visitors, he expounded to them the most recondite doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism.

[2](#) Allusion to the title of the Lotus Sutra, which is in full the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wondrous Law, the name consisting, as in many other cases, of the plain

mention of the subject-matter and the metaphorical description of the thing.

1 I.e. third chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.

2 Ox-carriage. Even at the present time it is customary for the hearse at the Imperial funeral to be drawn by oxen.

3 The threefold world of desire, form and non-form in which the soul of man is destined to transmigrate until it is saved, is compared to a house on fire. This well-known parable is told in the third chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.

1 In the above-mentioned parable the three vehicles are described as being drawn respectively by sheep, deer and oxen, symbolizing the three ways of salvation preached in Hinayana (lesser vehicle) Buddhism. According to the *Lotus Sutra*, however, Buddha really bestows on his believers a single coach drawn by huge milk-white bulls, symbolizing Mahayana (greater vehicle) Buddhism.

2 The all-comprehensive absolute principle of the universe—corresponding in some respects to God-the-Father—which together with the Body-of-Reward acquired by a buddha upon attaining supreme enlightenment through the practice of all disciplines and good deeds in the course of innumerable lives, and the Body-of-Transformation assumed by a buddha to save the world forms the Buddhist Trinity.

3 Quotation from the Chinese preface to the *Kokinshū*, written by Ki-no-Yoshimochi: "The vulgar vie with one another in seeking after fame and wealth and are indifferent to poetry. Alas! even if they rise to become ministers or generals or accumulate vast riches, they ultimately die and are forgotten even before their remains have decomposed in the grave..."

4 Another quotation from the preface: "There is nothing like poetry for moving heaven and earth, appealing to gods and demons, edifying people, harmonizing man and wife."

1 According to Chinese astrology, the northeast quarter is unlucky and is called 'the devil's gate,' because it is from this quarter that all sorts of evils can enter a place or house.

2 River which, springing from the mountains northwest of Kyoto, and flowing through the eastern part of the city, with several other large streams forms the Yodo which empties itself into the Bay of Osaka.

3 Quotation from a poem by the Chinese poet Chia Tao (賈島788-843) famous for the infinite pains he took in polishing his verse. It is said that the word *knock* in the lines quoted was only decided upon after pondering long whether the word *push* should not be used in preference to *knock*.

1, 2 Two expressions usually combined and forming a single Buddhist maxim: "To seek after the highest knowledge and to devote oneself to the salvation of others."

3 In Chinese philosophy the whole universe is reduced to two fundamental elements or principles, the positive yang and the negative yin. The nature of

everything is determined by the predominance of one or other of these elements in its composition, its behaviour depending upon the combined influence of the same principles. As applied to the seasons, spring and summer are dominated by *yang*, while autumn and winter are ruled by *yin*.

[4](#) Quotation from a poem by Ōshikōchi-no-Mitsune in the *Kokinshū*,

[1](#) Allusion to the Emperor Sutoku's poem in the *Senzauhū*, which reads:

The blossoms return to the foot of the tree.

And the birds to their nest,

But none knows

Where spring goes.

IZUTSU

(WELL-CURB)



CHORUS It does not look like a woman,
But a man—the living image of Narihira.
—Part II, scene 3.

INTRODUCTION

Izutsu is a *kazura-mono* or 'female-wig' play in which the *jo-no-mai* dance is accompanied by a large and a small hand-drum.

About a thousand years ago there lived two famous lovers: Ariwara-no-Nari-hira, one of the Six Major Poets¹ of the Early Heian Period (794-930), and the daughter of Ki-no-Aritsune. Narihira who came of a princely family and was known not less for his gallantry than for his poetry, has since become a legendary figure. In this play, however, the Narihira legend is greatly modified. As children, hero and heroine were neighbours. Outside the gate of one of their houses was a well, and the children used to lean over its wooden curb (*izutsu*) and peer down at their smiling faces and flowing hair reflected in its waters. As they grew older, they became self-conscious and shy of each other. In spite of this, their mutual attachment was growing stronger, and later they married. Their married life, however, was not happy. For Narinira, who was by nature passionate and fickle, soon fell in love with another woman living over the hills in Kawachi Province, to whom he paid nightly visits. But the unselfish devotion of his wife stirring his heart, he returned to her, and they lived happily together until his death. Such is the playwright's treatment of the Narihira legend where, as will be seen, the wife's love which survives her death is symbolized by the ghost that haunts the grave and offers flowers to Narinira's memory, thus suggesting the eternity of love.

In Part One a travelling priest visits a temple which, according to tradition, was built on the site of the house occupied by Narihira and his wife. The sight of an old wooden well-curb half-hidden by *susuki* grass and of an ancient tombstone, recalls to his mind their famous love-story.

In Part Two the heroine, dressed in her husband's princely robe and headgear, performs an *utsuri-mai* (impersonation dance)—in this

case a type of *jo-no-mai* accompanied by a large and a small hand-drum. The climax is reached when the wife in her intense longing for the past identifies herself, as it were, with her husband and reclining on the well-curb sees his image in place of her own reflected in the still waters below her. All this, however, is but a vision. Day dawns, the vision fades, and nothing remains but dreary reality which fills the priest with sadness and regret.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443)

Source: *Ise Monogatari*,¹ chap. xxii; The prefatory note to the poems exchanged by the two lovers and contained in Vol. XV of the *Kokinshū*, which states explicitly that Narihira married Ari-tsune's daughter.

IZUTSU

Persons

TRAVELLING PRIEST	<i>Waki</i>
MAIDEN	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>kyōgen</i>
GHOST OF KI-NO-ARITSUNE'S DAUGHTER	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two

Place

Ariwara Temple, Isonokami, Yamato Province

Season

Autumn

PART ONE

Stage-attendants place on the front of the stage a framework square well-curb with a sheaf of susuki grass at one corner.

1

While the entrance music nanoribue is being played, the PRIEST, wearing a pointed hood, plain kimono and broad-sleeved robe, appears and advances to the Shite Seat.

PRIEST I am a priest on pilgrimage from province to province. Of late I have visited the Seven Great Temples of Nara¹ and now am on my way to Hatsuse.²

When I enquired from someone about this temple, I was told it was the Ariwara Temple. I will enter the



grounds and see what it is like.

Advances to the centre of the stage and faces the well-curb.

Surely in bygone days the Ariwara Temple
Was the Isonokami home
Where Narihira and Ki-no-Aritsune's daughter
Once lived as man and wife.
Surely here too was written
“Over Tatsuta's mountain pass¹
Perilous as storm-tossed seas...”

sage-uta As I stand on the site of this ancient tale,
I feel the transitoriness of life.
Now, for the sake of those twin souls,
Will I perform religious rites,
Will I perform religious rites.

Joins his hands in prayer and moves to the Waki Seat,

2

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the MAIDEN, wearing a 'young woman' mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono and brocade outer-kimono, appears carrying a spray of leaves² and stands at the Shite Seat.

MAIDEN *shidai* Gazing into the crystal water I draw each morning,
Gazing into the crystal water I draw each morning,
The moon, too, seems to cleanse her heart.

CHORUS *jidori* Gazing into the crystal water I draw each morning,
The moon, too, seems to cleanse her heart.

MAIDEN *sashi* Autumn nights are lonely anywhere,
Yet even lonelier
Is this old temple rarely visited,
When the autumn winds sigh through the garden pines.
The moon sinking westward,



The drooping eaves o'ergrown with waving ferns—
All reminds me of the past.
Alas! how long must I still live
And naught to hope for in the future!
Each thing that happens leaves its mark upon the
mind;
Such is our mortal world.



sage-uta Buddha, I cast myself on thee
With all my heart, praying continually
That with the unseen thread held in thy hand¹
Thou wilt at last lead me to Paradise!

age-uta Thy vow is to enlighten those in darkness,
Thy vow is to enlighten those in darkness.
Although the moon at dawn
Does surely hasten towards the western hills
Where lies the Land of Bliss,
Yet between here and there
Stretches the vast and empty autumn sky
As far as eye can reach.
We hear the winds sighing through the pines,
But know not whence they blow nor whither.¹
In this world more fleeting than the wind,
Vain dreams deceive our minds.
What call will have the power to waken us,
What call will have the power to waken us!



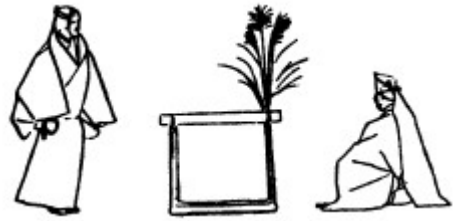
*Comes to the front of the stage' sits down, places the spray of leaves
before her and joins her hands in prayer, then returns to the Shite Seat.*

3

PRIEST While meditating in the temple grounds I see an attractive
woman draw water from a well with a wooden curb and,
having poured it into a wooden vessel containing flowers,
offer it reverently to a grass-covered mound. Pray, who are
you?

Turns to the MAIDEN.

MAIDEN I am a woman of this neighbourhood. The pious benefactor of this temple, Ariwara-no-Narihira, was a famous man and the tombstone by this mound is supposed to be his. Therefore I offer flowers to it and pray for his salvation.



PRIEST Yes, Narihira has left an undying name behind him. This place may indeed have been the site of his home, but since his story goes back to ancient times, I am filled with wonder that any one, especially a woman, should thus be praying for him.

Perchance you are related to him?

MAIDEN You ask whether I am related to him? But even in his day he was called the 'Ancient.'¹ Now, after this long lapse of time, he belongs to the remote past. How can there still live any one related to him?

PRIEST You speak truth,
Yet this was once his home.

MAIDEN Though he is long since dead,

PRIEST This place remains as it was once,

MAIDEN And tales that keep his fame alive

PRIEST Are handed down to us.

MAIDEN So the 'Ancient'

CHORUS Is still remembered,

age-uta Though time-worn is the Ariwara Temple,

Though time-worn is the Ariwara Temple.

Grass covers this mound

Shadowed by ancient pines,

And only this one bush

Of flowering *susuki*

Marks where he sleeps for evermore,

And might, indeed, unfold a tale

Of bygone days.

The sight of this old mound,

Hidden under lush grass



Drenched with weary dew,
Is precious to the lonely heart,
Is precious to the lonely heart!



The MAIDEN sits down and weeps.

4

PRIEST I wish you would tell me more about Narihira.

The MAIDEN rises and, coining to the centre of the stage, sits down.

CHORUS Once Narihira, captain of the Imperial
kuri Body-guard,
Enjoyed for many years spring flowers and autumn moons
Here at Isonokami, then fallen into decay.

MAIDEN 'Twas when he lived in wedlock
sashi With Ki-no-Aritsune's daughter,
Bound each to other by strong love!

CHORUS Later bewitched by a new love
At Takayasu¹ in Kawachi Province,
And loth to give up either,
Secretly he visited her of nights.

MAIDEN "Over Tatsuta's mountain pass,

CHORUS Perilous as storm-tossed seas,
He speeds at midnight all alone!"
Thus sang his wife
Fearing that treacherous pass.
Moved by her selfless love,
His new love withered.

MAIDEN Since poetry alone can tell our deepest feelings,

CHORUS Well might her selfless love inspire such a moving poem.

kuse Here in this province long ago
Two households once lived side by side,
The children, boy and girl, were playmates;
Leaning over the well-curb beyond the gate,
They peered together down the well
Where mirrored lay their faces cheek to cheek,

Their sleeves hanging o'er each other's shoulder.
Thus used those bosom friends to play.
In time they grew reserved and shy,
Till the faithful-hearted youth
Sent her a letter with a poem
Telling his flower-like love
In words like sparkling dew-drops:



MAIDEN "Standing against the well-curb,
As children we compared our heights,

CHORUS But I have grown much taller
Since last I saw you."¹

Answering the maiden wrote:

"The hair I parted

When by the well-curb we compared our heights,
Now loose flows down my back.

For whom but you should it again be tied?"²

For this exchange of poems

They called her the 'Lady of the Well-Curb.'

5

CHORUS Listening to this ancient lovers' tale,
rongi I am filled with wonder at your charm.
Please disclose your name!

MAIDEN It you would know the truth,
Taking the shape of Aritsune's daughter,
By yearning moved, I have come back to my old home,
Treading under the veil of night
A road perilous as the Tatsuta Pass.

CHORUS How wonderful!
Then you are the lady of the Tatsuta Pass?

MAIDEN "Daughter of Ki-no-Aritsune" am I

CHORUS And "Lady of the Well-Curb" too.

MAIDEN With shame I own to both those names.

CHORUS Scarce has she revealed the name
Of her who tied the nuptial knot
When but nineteen

And made her vow before the gods,
Than she fades away behind the well-curb,
Than she fades away behind the well-curb.

The MAIDEN rises.

The MAIDEN goes out.



INTERLUDE

The MAN OF THE PLACE *enters the stage, wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe and trailing divided skirt, and short sword. In reply to the PRIEST's request, he tells him the tale of Ki-no-Ari-tsune's DAUGHTER.*

PART TWO

1

PRIEST The night is growing old!
machi-utai Above the temple hangs the moon,
Above the temple hangs the moon.
Wishing to dream of times gone by,
I turn my robe inside out,¹
And lay me down upon this bed of moss,
And lay me down upon this bed of moss.



2

While the entrance music issei is being played, the GHOST OF KI-NO-ARITSUNE'S DAUGHTER, wearing a 'young woman' mask, wig, man's ceremonial headgear, painted gold-patterned underkimono, dancing chōken robe and embroidered koshimaki outerkimono, appears and stands at the Shite Seat.

DAUGHTER "Though people call them shifty,
sashi Yet the cherry-blossoms never fail
Him who seeks my garden once a year
Less for my sake than for theirs.'²

This poem gained for me
The name of 'Friend-Awaiting Woman.'
Many a year has passed with varying fortunes
Since Narihira and I played by the well-curb;
Now bereft of him, though ill-becoming,
I don this robe he gave me
And dance as he was wont to do.



CHORUS Graceful as whirling flakes of
snow,
The dancer waves her flowery
sleeves.



*The DAUGHTER performs a jo-no-mai
dance.*

DAUGHTER Hither returned I call back time past

CHORUS And on the ancient well
Of the Ariwara Temple
The moon shines brightly as of old,
The moon shines brightly as of old.



3

DAUGHTER "Is not the moon in heaven the same?
Is not the springtime as it was?"¹
Thus did he sing, long, long ago.
"Standing against the well-curb,

Dances while the following lines are chanted.

CHORUS Standing against the well-curb,
As children we compared our heights.

DAUGHTER But I

CHORUS Have grown much taller."

DAUGHTER And much older.

CHORUS Wearing this robe and headgear
As Narihira did,
It does not look like a woman,

But a man—the living image of Narihira.

Approaching the well, the DAUGHTER pushes aside the susuki grass and peers down into it.

DAUGHTER How dear the face I see!

CHORUS How dear the face, though it be mine!
See! The ghost of the dead lady fades
Like the lingering scent of fading
flowers.



The DAUGHTER moves away.

The sky is turning grey;
The Ariwara Temple's bell starts to toll,
Ushering in the morn.
The garden pines awaken with the breeze;

She wraps the left sleeve round her arm and covers her face with the open fan and bends forward.

She stands still as if listening to the bell.

And like the torn leaves of the *bashō*¹ tree
The priest's dream is shattered and day dawns,
The priest's dream is shattered and day dawns.

She stamps twice at the Shite Seat.

Footnotes

¹ Critical remarks on these poets (Abbot Henjō, Ono-no-Komachi, Bun'ya-no-Yasuhide, Ōtomo-no-Kuronushi, Monk Kisen and Ariwara-no-Narihira) appear in the preface of the *Kokinshū*.

¹ Though the real authorship is disputed, the author of the tale is popularly attributed to Narihira himself.

¹ The temples referred to are: Tōdai-ji (東大寺), Kōfuku-ji (興福寺), Gangō-ji (元興寺), Daian-ji (大安寺), Yakushi-ji (西大寺), Saidai-ji (西大寺), and Hōryū-ji (法隆寺). Some are situated in the city itself, others in the neighbourhood.

[2](#) Situated in Yamato Province and famous for the Hase-dera Temple dating from the eighth century.

[1](#) Pass crossing a hill of the same name in the mountain-range between Yamato and Kawachi Provinces. The Tatsuta Shrine, one of the most ancient Shinto temples, situated on the eastern slope of Tatsuta Hill south of Mt. Shigi, was erected in the seventh century by Imperial order and dedicated to the wind-god. The river flowing east of the hill is also called Tatsuta and has been much celebrated in ancient literature on account of the autumn tints of the maples which line its banks.

[2](#) Or a small wooden bucket with a spray of leaves representing flowers.

[1](#) In Jōdō-kyō except for the Shin sect, it was customary for a dying person to hold in the left hand one end of a thread attached to a hand of the image of Amida Buddha in order that he should fix his mind on His saving power.

[1](#) The metaphor seems analogous to that found in the third chapter of *St. John*, except that here the changeableness of wind is used to symbolize the uncertainty of human life.

[1](#) Each chapter of the *Ise Monogatari* begins with the words: "In ancient times there was a man." Since the anonymous hero is understood to be Narihira, the author of the present play pretends that Narihira was called the 'Ancient' in his lifetime.

[1](#) Situated at the foot of a mountain of the same name in Naka-Kawachi County of that province.

[1, 2](#) Quoted from the *Ise Monogatari*, chap. xxii.

[1](#) It was an ancient custom for lovers to sleep with their kimono turned inside out so that they might dream of their beloved, as mentioned in a poem by Ono-no-Komachi in the *Kokinshū*:

When overwhelmed
By the yearning for the one I love,
I go to bed,
Wearing my garment inside out.

[2](#) Quoted from the *Ise Monogatari*, chap, xvi, as attributed to the hero of the work, i.e. Narihira. The poem is also found in the *Kokinshū* where the author's name is not mentioned.

[1](#) Quoted from the *Ise Monogatari*, chap. iv. The poem, which also appears in the *Kokinshū* and is a cry of a heart-broken lover whose beloved had been taken away whither he did not know, is translated in its full form on p. 83, note 1.

[1](#) See *Bashō* p. 127, note 1.

EGUCHI



LADY I own to be the Lady of Eguchi, for so I once was
called
And this, most reverend sir, a moon-viewing party.
—Part II, scene 2.

INTRODUCTION

Eguchi is a typical *kazura-mono* or 'female wig' play. It belongs to the subdivision called *daishō-jo-no-mai-mono* which has a special dance accompanied by a large and a small hand-drum as well as a flute.

In olden days the town of Eguchi¹ on the river Yodo in Settsu Province was a pleasure resort famous for the courtesans it provided for the entertainment of travellers. The most celebrated of these was known as the "Lady of Eguchi." According to tradition Saigyō (1118—90), the hermit poet, finding himself benighted at Eguchi, asked her for a night's lodging, but was refused, whereupon he composed and recited the lines,

"Yet even for one night
You grudge me your temporary lodging."²

The truth, however, was that the Lady of Eguchi did not really grudge giving him shelter, but only refused his request for the good of his soul. Wishing that he should rise above caring for such earthly things, she riposted with the lines,

"I would you took no thought
For a temporary lodging."³

According to another tradition,⁴ the courtesan who made this ready repartee, was an incarnation of Fugen⁵ Bosatsu (Bodhisattva Samantabhadra). The theme of the present play is derived from a combination of these two traditions.

Part One tells how a travelling monk and his two attendants on their way from Miyako to the Tennō-ji Temple⁶ in Osaka, arrived at Eguchi. Remembering the legend of the Lady of Eguchi, he asks to be directed to the site of her ancient home, which inspires him to recite Saigyō's poem. No sooner has he done so than her ghost

suddenly appears and, after explaining the real motive for refusing Saigyō a night's lodging, vanishes.

In the Interlude the mystified monk then asks his guide to tell him about the Lady of Eguchi and learns that local tradition credits her with being an incarnation of Bodhisattva Fugen. An ancient legend¹ also tells how Shōkū Shōnin (910-1007) of Mt. Shosha in Harima Province prayed earnestly to Kwannon Bosatsu (Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara) to let him see Fugen in visible form.

One night, in a dream, he was told to go to Eguchi in Settsu Province and to seek out the courtesan known as the Lady of Eguchi. On reaching the place he found her in a boat on the river with other courtesans making merry. As the Shōnin closed his eyes, the murmuring waters seemed like voices sweetly chanting verses from the Holy Sutra. Suddenly the glorious vision of Bodhisattva Fugen attended by a host of female *rasetsu*² appeared before him, and he knew that his prayer had been answered. When again he opened his eyes there was the Lady of Eguchi in her human form as before. So deeply moved was the monk by the tale told him by the Man of the Place that he agreed to recite sutras in her honour.

Part Two represents the vision of the Lady of Eguchi which appears to the chanting monks. A gay framework barge is brought on to the Bridgeway in which the Lady and two young women are standing in the gorgeous attire of courtesans. Charming songs and graceful dances appropriate to such a river party are performed. The songs express the religious truth that the world is only a temporary sojourn and that when one attains spiritual detachment from the world, the transient will be found to be the eternal, and passion and wisdom to be one. The heroine who cries, "Oh, rapture!" and is inspired by the revelation to perform a dance, is no longer a mere courtesan and, at the end, transformed into Bodhisattva Fugen riding a milk-white elephant, is borne away on a cloud. Gazing at this, the monk sheds tears of heavenly joy.

Eguchi technically occupies a very high place among Noh plays on account of the interesting and very difficult double role of the heroine, at once a beautiful and witty courtesan and Bodhisattva Fugen, and illustrates the Mahayana doctrine that even the meanest

creature in the world is potentially a Bodhisattva, thus explaining the apparent contradiction between the two personalities.

Author: Kwannami Kiyotsugu (1334-1384)

Source: *Shin Kokinshū* (1205), *Jikkinshō* (1252), *Kojidan* (1212-1215), and *Senjūshō* (1183).

EGUCHI

Persors

TRAVELLING MONK	<i>Waki</i>
TWO ATTENDANTS	<i>Waki-zure</i>
MAN OF THE PLACE	<i>kyōgen</i>
WOMAN	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
GHOST OF LADY OF EGUCHI	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two
TWO WOMEN ATTENDANTS	<i>Tsure</i>

Place

Town of Eguchi, Settsu Province

Season

Autumn

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the TRAVELLING MONK and Two ATTENDANTS enter the stage. They are wearing pointed hoods, small-checked under-kimonos, white broad divided skirts and broad-sleeved robes.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

shidai If the moon is an old friend,
If the moon is an old friend,
How can we flee the world?¹

CHORUS If the moon is an old friend,
jidori How can we flee the world?

MONK I am a monk travelling from province to province. Since I have not yet visited the Tennō-ji Temple in Settsu Province, I have decided to make a pilgrimage to that holy shrine.



MONK and ATTENDANTS

michi-yuki Leaving Miyako before dawn,
We take boat down the river Yodo¹;
We pass reedy Udono²;
Then in the hazy distance we sight
Eguchi's clustering pines and lapping waves,
And at long last we reach the town itself,
And at long last we reach the town itself.

MONK Is any inhabitant of Eguchi about?

The MAN OF THE PLACE, *wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe and trailing divided skirt, rises from the kyōgen Seat and moves to the First Pine.*

MAN You are asking for someone of this place. What is your pleasure?

The ATTENDANTS sit in front of the CHORUS, while the Monk stands at the Shite Seat.

MONK I am a monk from Miyako here for the first time. Please direct me to the spot where the Lady of Eguchi lived in ancient times.

MAN It is over there. You are welcome to go and see it, if you care to.

MONK Thank you for your kindness. I shall go there and see what there is to be seen.

MAN If you need anything further, I shall be at your service.

MONK Thank you.

The MAN sits on the kyōgen Seat,

MONK Is this where the Lady of Eguchi lived?

Stands at the centre of the stage.

sashi Though her body, alas! long since rests buried in the earth,
Her memory is for ever green.
'Tis sad to view the scene of the ancient tale.

It is said that in days gone by the monk Saigyō came here and asked for a night's lodging, but the lady of the house refused him, and he composed the poem:

Hard may it be for you, a woman,
To cast the world far from you,
Yet even for one night
You grudge me your temporary
lodging.

It must have been just here. Alas, poor
soul!

Oh!.... Reverend sir!



Voice of a woman behind the Curtain,

The WOMAN enters, wearing a 'young woman' mask, painted gold-patterned under-Kimono and brocade outer-kimono.

WOMAN Oh! What prompted you to recite that poem?

MONK How strange that a woman should appear when there are no houses to be seen, and ask why I recited the poem!

But what is that to you?

WOMAN I had long forgotten it, but that poem has brought it all back to me.

Though the world is like dew on the grassy plain,
To renounce it may be too hard for a woman,
But worse than that, I denied a traveller
Even a lodging for the night.

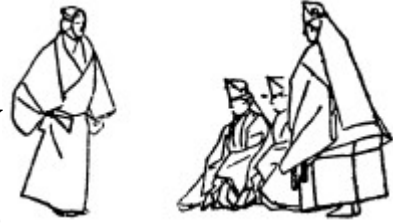
Thus says the poem to my shame.

But since I did not mean what those words implied,
I now have come to tell you why I did so.



Advances singing on to the stage.

MONK I cannot understand. Finding myself
on the spot where long ago Saigyō said,
"Yet even for one night
You grudge me your temporary
lodging,"¹



I have been feeling vaguely sorry for the
lady of the house. And now you appear and
say you did not grudge him shelter, as we have supposed.
Who may you be?

WOMAN Stay! It is just as I had guessed. Why did you not also recite
my poem, which shows I did not really grudge it?

MONK Yes, I remember:

"Since I am told you are a monk,

WOMAN Who has renounced the world,
I would you took no thought
For a temporary lodging."²

So I advised him. Had I not good reason to refuse him
lodging in such a house? MONK Yes, you were right,
Since Saigyō had renounced this worldly life,

WOMAN And ours was a notorious house of pleasure with many
mysteries.

In such a place

MONK You said he should not seek a lodging,

WOMAN Being mindful of his holy life.

MONK Yet people say

WOMAN I grudged him shelter.

CHORUS To grudge

age-uta In such a case is not to grudge,
In such a case is not to grudge.
Why should folk say that I was grudging?
That ancient story has been handed down,
But, reverend sir, heed not that idle tale.



CHORUS Dusk is falling as I listen to the well-known *rongi* story.

Who is she who before my eyes
Now grows dim and shadow-like?

WOMAN The figure standing in the dusk
May seem to you the Lady of Eguchi,
Who lived a life of ill repute,
By a half-hidden creek along this river.
O shame!

CHORUS And surely in this place she passed away
Like a spent wave upon the beach.

WOMAN "The flowering plum-tree

CHORUS At my house of sojourn
Maybe has caught your eye,

WOMAN Since unlooked-for

CHORUS You have come."¹
Nay, but your coming here
Originates from some bond in our previous
lives, Were it no more
Than taking shelter under the same tree,
Or drawing water from the same stream.¹
Of this you can be sure!
I am the Lady of Eguchi's ghost!...
Saying these words she fades away,
Saying these words she fades away.



Goes out.

INTERLUDE

the MONK again calls the MAN OF THE PLACE, who tells him of a legend according to which the LADY of Eguchi was an incarnation of Fugen Bosatsu. He then mentions to him the apparition of the WOMAN, with whom he has just conversed. At his suggestion the MONK prepares to chant some sutra in her honour.

PART TWO

1

MONK The Lady of Eguchi must have assumed a visible form in order to speak with me.

Now, let us chant a requiem for her ghost.

MONK and ATTENDANTS

machi-utai I had no sooner finished speaking, than, behold!

I had no sooner finished speaking, than, behold!

There on the shimmering river waters
A pleasure-boat with singing courtesans
Appeared floating in the moonlight. A wondrous sight!
Appeared floating in the moonlight. A wondrous sight!



2

A framework barge is placed on the Bridgeway. While the entrance music issei is being played, the LADY OF EGUGHI enters the barge. She wears the same mask as in Part One, brocade outer-kimono tucked up, and scarlet broad divided start. Two WOMEN ATTENDANTS follow her, wearing tsure masks, painted gold-patterned under-kimonos and brocade outer-kimonos. One of them carries a bamboo pole and has her right arm slipped out of her outer-kimono.

CHORUS Mooring our barge,
age-uta Rocked gently by the waves we meet our
lovers,

Rocked gently by the waves we meet our
lovers.

Lured by the empty dreams of life,
Alas! we know not our true state.
Our sleeves are wet with tears like Lady
Sayo¹



Who, from a hill above Matsura,
Followed with tear-dimmed eyes
The ship that bore her lord to far Korea.
We, too, like the Lady of Uji Bridge,¹
Have known the bitterness
Of vainly watching, waiting
For the return of a faithless lover.
Be that as it may, this world is good,
Be that as it may, this world is good,
With its flowers and snows, its waves and clouds!
May prosperity attend us in this life!

MONK O wondrous sight!
Lo! upon the moonlit waters
A flock of luring courtesans
Are singing gaily.
Whose barge is it, I wonder?

LADY Whose barge, you ask?
I own to be the Lady of Eguchi, for so I once was called,
And this, most reverend sir, a moon-viewing party.

MONK You call yourself the Lady of Eguchi,
The same as she of olden days?

LADY Say not "of olden days." Look at the moon! Has she changed
since olden days?

ATTENDANTS See! Are we not here too?
To say that we belong to olden days is silly!

LADY It you nave more to say or ask,

ATTENDANTS We shall not listen or reply.

LADY How vexing!

LADY and ATTENDANTS

issei "The autumn waters flow swift and deep;
The boat darts down the stream,"¹

LADY Merrily sing the girls,
Their oars glitter in the moonlight.

CHORUS Come! Let us sing away the night!
sage-uta We are ladies of pleasure in a boat,
Stirred by yearning for the past;

Let us seek easement in those ancient
ditties
We once did sing to charm our guests.

*The LADY and the ATTENDANTS step out of the barge,
which is removed. Advancing to the centre of the stage,
she sits on a stool while the others sit in front of the Flute-
player.*



3

CHORUS "The Law of the Twelve Causes² is like
kuri unto a wheel

Endlessly rolling along a highway;

LADY Sentient creatures now sink, now rise,
Like birds that fly from branch to branch."³

CHORUS Life after life into the past—

LADY Whence the cycle first began is hidden from us.

CHORUS Life after life into the future—

Whither the cycle ends we cannot know.

LADY Sometimes creatures are born into the happy
sashi state

Of men or heavenly beings,

CHORUS Yet by error overcast, their minds
Fail to sow the seed of salvation;

LADY Sometimes they're reborn into the Three Worst States,¹
Or fall a prey to the Eight Evils,²

CHORUS And fettered by such misfortunes
They know not how to enter the True Way.³

LADY And we, though born in human form—
A chance that rarely comes to pass—

CHORUS Were born frail vessels or sin;
Most helpless of all women, like reeds carried down the
stream.⁴

Grievous it is to think upon the sins
Committed by us in our former lives.

kuse On spring mornings



The hills do clothe themselves in pink brocade robes
Which evening breezes scatter;
On autumn evenings
Tinted leaves dapple the trees with gold,
Only to wither under the morning frost.
Fanned by the breezes through the pines,
Or lit up by the creeper-veiled moon.



The LADY rises and dances while the following lines are chanted.

The guests we spoke to face to face
Leave us, never to return.
Lovers whose pillows lie side by side
Under green curtains in red bowers,
In time grow cold.
Can any creature—insentient plant or sentient man



—
Escape from mutability?
Yet though we know this,

LADY Lured by the eye

We grow attached to things;

CHORUS Ravished by sweet sounds

We become their thralls.

Such things deceive the mind

And lead the tongue to falseness.

Alas! Man is a wanderer in the world of the Six
Dusts

And sins through the Organs or Perception,

Yet most temptations come through the eye and the
ear.



4

CHORUS O rapture!

The LADY performs a jo-no-mai dance.

5

LADY The boundless ocean of Reality and Truth
Is never ruffled by the winds
Of the Five Defilements¹ and the Six Desires,²

Continues to dance while the following lines are chanted.

CHORUS And yet the waves of Moving-Being¹
Day in, day out, do rise,
Day in, day out, do rise.

LADY What causes these waves to rise?
Man's vain attachment
To his temporary lodging.

CHORUS But once man has attained detachment,
The fleeting world exists no more;

LADY Lovers no longer

CHORUS Are anxiously waited for when night falls;

LADY No more the grief of parting.

CHORUS Spring flowers and autumn leaves,
Moon and snow—all cease to move him.

LADY I recall to mind,

CHORUS "I recall to mind
I told one to take no thought
For a temporary lodging.
Adieu, monk! I must return."
See! Bodhisattva Fugen now reveals herself,



Advancing to the centre of the stage, the LADY pauses and stamps repeatedly, thereby symbolizing her ascension.

The barge becomes a milk-white elephant,
And aureoled Fugen sails,
Borne by snow-white clouds,
Across the western sky.
Oh! gracious vision, flooding the heart with joy,
Oh! gracious vision, flooding the heart with joy!

She stamps twice at the Shite Seat,

Footnotes

[1](#) Name of one of the fords across the river Yodo (see p. 114, note 1.), formerly the estuary of that river; hence its name "River-mouth." In the Heian period it was a very flourishing sea-port town where sea-going ships carrying passengers and merchandise bound for Miyako transhipped their cargoes to river-boats. It was also much famed for its brothels and the beauty of their inmates.

[2, 3](#) Poems contained in Saigyō's *Senjūshō*.

[4](#) Referred to in the *Jikkinshō*, where the heroine is a courtesan of Kwanzaki, Settsu Province, in stead of the Lady of Eguchi.

[5](#) Fugen and Monju are two great Bodhisattvas of the Buddha triad who assist Sakyamuni in the work of salvation. The former is represented sitting on a white elephant which symbolizes the majestic self-possession and mighty power the Bodhisattva attained through meditation and spiritual training.

[6](#) Large Buddhist temple in Osaka founded in the sixth century by Prince-Regent Shōtoku.

[1](#) The author deliberately grafts the legend of Shōkū Shōnin and the courtesan of Kwanzaki on to the tale of the Lady of Eguchi, thus preparing for the later revelation of the identity of the Eguchi courtesan and the Bodhisattva Fugen.

[2](#) *Rasetsu* or *rakshasi* are beautiful man-eating she-devils who, according to the *Lotus Sutra*, vowed ever to protect all believers in the power of the Sutra during the third Buddhist evil millennium when Buddhism decays.

[1](#) The meaning of the two lines is: "We have, indeed, renounced the world, in the popular sense of the term, but when we look at the moon or at other natural objects, we find it is an old friend. Thus, strictly speaking, nature is also part of the world; how then can one get outside it?" These words seem to adumbrate a dualistic way of thinking to be refuted by the Bodhisattva's revelation at the close of the play.

[1](#) The rivers Uji and Katsura join at the town of Yodo, south of Kyoto, and form the river Yodo which is navigable and flows into the Bay of Osaka. The town was the starting-point for river-boats plying between there and Osaka.

[2](#) Place on the river Yodo famed for its lush growth of reeds.

[1, 2](#) Sec p. 109, note 2. This poetic dialogue is also given in the *Shin Kokinshū*, where the author ship of the latter poem is attributed to a lady called Tae.

[1](#) Poem by Taira-no-Kanemori contained in the *Shūishū* (c. 1000). The ghost quotes the poem to express her joy at the monk's unexpected visit to the site of her former house.

[1](#) See *Tamura*, p. 32, note 1.



1 In 537 when Mimana (任那) in Korea, then a tributary of Japan, was invaded by a neighbouring state, the Emperor Senka sent Ōtomo-no-Sadehiko with troops to relieve the country. His wife Sayo-hime accompanied him as far as Matura, Hizen Province, Kyūshū. As his ship was setting sail, she climbed a hill near-by shedding bitter tears and waving her scarf, and refused to leave even after the ship was lost to sight. So heart-breaking were her lamentations that a legend later arose to the effect that Lady Sayo was turned into a stone, which is still standing on the hill.

1 Alludes to an anonymous poem in the *Kokinshū*, which reads:

Lying dressed on her sleeping mat,
This night too
She must be waiting for me,
O poor Lady of Uji Bridge!

Scholars have not yet discovered the lady's identity.

1 First line of a Chinese couplet contained in the *Wakan Rōeishū*. The second line reads:

The clouds of night have vanished
And the moon is sailing slowly across the sky.

2 Buddhist doctrine which explains the workings of *karma* as the principle of existence. The Twelve Causes are twelve links in the endless chain of lives and deaths and, according to one interpretation, give rise to past, present and future lives. They are: ignorance and activity (in the past life): consciousness, the foetal senses, the six organs of perception, sensation and discrimination, choice, pursuit, *karma* (in the present life): birth and death (in the future life).

3 Quotation from the *Rokudō Kōshiku*

1 Buddhism teaches that an unenlightened soul is eternally bound by its *karma* to wander about the six states of existence, i.e. the world of heavenly beings, of human beings, of Asuras, of hungry devils, of brutes and of hell; of these states the first three are the best and the last three the worst.

2 What is common to the Eight Evils is that those subject to them cannot see buddhas or hear the right way and that they are due to the nature of the conditions in which souls find themselves. If a soul is an inhabitant of hell, or a brute or a hungry devil it is unable, because of its sufferings, to listen to the preaching of the Law; if it is born in the 'Heaven of long life' or according to ancient Indian cosmography, in the northern continent of Uttan-otsu, it cannot become an earnest believer in the Law because it enjoys longevity. One who is born blind, deaf or dumb, or is too worldly-wise or sophisticated cannot believe in the Way. Finally one who is born before or after the time of a buddha, will find great difficulty in attaining faith in his teachings.

3 Some sects of Buddhism hold that the gate of salvation is closed to women, so that it is necessary for them to be transformed into men before being able to

attain Buddhahood.

[4](#) Metaphor for the career of a harlot.

[1](#) See *Tamura*, p. 25, note 5.

[2](#) I.e. six desires for the pleasing objects perceived through the five senses and the mind.

[1](#) Moving-Being is another way of saying 'Reality subject to causation (隨緣眞如) as contrasted with Immutable Reality (不變眞如) both are aspects of reality which expresses itself in phenomena while retaining its substance unchanged and undefiled.

BASHŌ



CHORUS Its sleeves are sadly torn.
What a disgrace!

—Part II, scene 3.

INTRODUCTION

Bashō is a *kazura-mono* or 'female wig' play in which the *jo-no-mai* dance is performed without the accompaniment of a horizontal drum.

Inspired by the Buddhist doctrine that plants can attain Buddhahood, the author personifies the *bashō-tree*¹ as a pensive woman who, in the presence of a hermit renowned for his saintliness, expresses in impassioned words her feeling of gratitude towards this Buddhist doctrine explained in the "Parable of the Medicinal Plants" in the *Lotus Sutra*. The beneficent influence of rain and dew, though but simple water, causes all manner of plants to grow and blossom, thus illustrating Buddha's teaching that all creatures in the universe may be led to develop their inherent Buddha-nature. But since ineffable Absolute Reality is the fundamental nature of all beings, every thing that exists is identified with the Absolute. All things, while they are subject, individually, to birth and death and are finite both as to attributes and functions, constitute an organic whole; they intermingle and interact by virtue of the oneness of their nature, thus constituting a single life. The latter is ever-growing and changing, yet may, at any moment, return to the one reality which transcends existence and non-existence, i.e. to the ineffable Absolute.

Buddhist enlightenment consists in the realization of the oneness of all things. And since all creatures are endowed with Buddha-nature, all may attain enlightenment, which is but another way of saying that they can become Buddhas. Everything, therefore, whether sentient or non-sentient, is held capable of reverting to ultimate reality, if given the opportunity. From this point of view the *bashō-tree*, for instance, may also attain Buddhahood. The salvation of a plant, however, is not a privilege limited to this individual plant. That a *bashō-tree*, as in the case of the heroine of the present play,

should have attained Buddhahood is a proof that all other trees of the same kind, and indeed, the whole of plant life, are destined to achieve the same blessedness by virtue of the all-pervading oneness of nature.

The scene is laid in ancient China by a river in the land of Tsu. A *bashō-tree* growing nearby happens to hear a hermit reciting the *Lotus Sutra*. The sacred words give it the chance of gaining enlightenment and, ultimately, Buddhahood. Since dramatic requirements demand, however, that the tree should assume a form suitable for presentation on the stage, it is represented in human shape. The *bashō—tree* with its soft straight stem crowned with large, glossy leaves seems to possess certain feminine characteristics, but, lacking attractiveness, it is represented as a woman past her prime. Again, since the *bashō* is originally an exotic plant, though found in parts of the mainland of Japan, this may have led the author to place the scene of the play in China. It should further be noted that in Buddhist literature the *bashō-tree* is a symbol of impermanence and as such tends to evoke feelings of melancholy.

A hermit who has embraced a particularly rigorous rule of life, while in mid-autumn reciting nightly aloud the *Lotus Sutra*, becomes aware of the presence of some one in the moonlit garden outside his cell-window. Upon enquiring who it is, a woman confesses that she is the spirit of a *bashō-tree*. In token of her gratitude for the opportunity afforded her to gain enlightenment through listening to the reading of the *Lotus Sutra*, she performs a dance, waving her sleeves which represent the broad leaves of the *bashō-tree*.

Such is the story of the play which, as will be seen, has practically no plot. Apart from illustrating the doctrine of the universal Buddha-nature, its chief interest lies in the graceful dance by an elderly woman clad in 'robe of ice' and 'skirt of frost' designed to awaken chaste emotions in the hearts of the audience.

Author: Komparu-Zenchiku (1405-1468)

Source: *Hu-hai-ksin-wen* (湖海新聞) which contains the anecdote of a *bashō-tree* disguised as a woman visiting a hermit; and the "Parable of the Medicinal

Plants” in the *Lotus Sutra*, which gave rise to the doctrine concerning the attainment of Buddhahood by plants.

BASHŌ

Persons

HERMIT LIVING AMONG THE HILLS

WOMAN

MAN OF THE PLACE

SPIRIT OF A BASHŌ-TREE

Waki

Shite in Part One

kyōgen

Shite in Part Two

Place

Hermitage near the River Hsiang-hsui in the Land of Tsu, China

Season

Autumn

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music nanoribue is being played, the Hermit, wearing a pointed hood, striped kimono, broad-sleeved robe, appears and advances to the Shite Seat with a sutra scroll slipped into the opening of his kimono.

HERMIT I am a monk who lives among the hills near the River Shōsui¹ in the Land of So in China. As I am a believer in the *Lotus Sutra*, I chant it aloud morning and evening, day and night. More than ever now that it is mid-autumn and the bright moon shines in the sky, I never relax my nightly devotions.



Now here is something strange: though no one lives in these deserted hills save myself, yet night after night while I

am reciting the sutra, I hear someone outside my hermit's cell. If he should come again to-night, I think I will ask his name.

Goes to the Waki Seat and sits down.

sashi Already the evening sun is setting in the west,
Shadows deepen in the valleys,
The cries of homing birds grow faint.

age-uta Slowly the night fills with radiance,
Slowly the night fills with radiance,
And as the autumn moon climbs to the sky,
In the stillness of my cell
Buried in the heart of the hills,
I read aloud the sacred book,
I read aloud the sacred book.

2

While the entrance music shidai is being placed, the WOMAN appears and advances to the Shite Seat. She wears a Fukai mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, and 'not-red' brocade outer-kimono and carries a rosary of crystal beads in the right hand and a spray of leaves in the left.

WOMAN The wind sweeps downwards through the pines,
shidai

The wind sweeps downwards through the pines,
Wantonly breaking the *bashō* leaves.

CHORUS The wind sweeps downwards through the pines,
jidori

Wantonly breaking the *bashō* leaves.

WOMAN "Through the broken window

sashi The gusts will blow out the lamp;
Piercing the ill-thatched roof
The moon-beams chase sleep from my eyes."¹
Thus must I spend the autumn nights,
Lost in the depths of these deserted hills;
Who is there to know my plight?



And thus my withered life draws to its close.
sage-uta For such a lonely one as I
Can have no mend save rocks and trees.

age-uta 'Tis hard to meet
The *Lotus Sutra*, and profound its truth,
The *Lotus Sutra*, and profound its truth.
Unless its spirit fill their hearts,
Even though clad in rich brocade,
Men cannot gain that peerless gem²
That will light up their minds.
My rugged sleeves are wet with dew and tears,



Takes two or three steps forward and, sitting down, places the spray of leaves on the floor, then returning to her former position, stands at the Shite Seat.

The months and years will come and go,
But not for me the autumns as of yore,
But not for me the autumns as of yore.



3

HERMIT While absorbed in reciting the sutra, half-dreaming half-
awake, I see a woman standing in the moonlight. Who is out there?

Rises.

WOMAN I am an inhabitant of the neighbourhood. Out of gratitude for the
sutra most hard to meet with in any life,¹ I have come here to offer
flowers and make obeisance so that I may enter upon Buddha's Way.

Since you have found me out,
May I make bold to ask your leave
To enter for a while your cell
And let my soul drink in the truth?

HERMIT Indeed, it is meet and proper to partake of
Truth, but as you are a woman and of such rare
beauty,

How can I let you in my cell?



WOMAN I well understand your reason, but I am in some way bound to you:

My home, too, is on Shōsui's banks,

HERMIT Both draw water from it;

Without our knowing it,

A bond in a past life joined us;

WOMAN I beg you, forbid me not your cell,

HERMIT "The shelter of the selfsame tree!"¹

CHORUS Piercing the crumbling eaves and walls,

age-uta The moon, too, lies on the dew-drenched floor,

The moon, too, lies on the dew-drenched floor.

"Grim are the hills through which my pathway wends,

The WOMAN dances while the following lines are chanted.

Filling my soul with awe,

But when I see an ancient temple by the cliff,

Awesome sorrow melts away."²

How desolate is this moon-lit scene!

What poet wrote:

"Behind the screens of damask and brocade

You watch the flowers in the Palace garden?"

But what comes next pleases me more;

"Within the hermit's cell I hear

The night rain falling on Mt. Rosan."³



The WOMAN stops at the; shite Seat and turns to the HERMIT.

4

HERMIT As your zeal is so great, you may enter and listen while I recite the sutra.

Comes to the centre of the stage and sits down, facing the HERMIT. The latter sits facing the Front audience and unrolling the sutra scroll, holds it up before him with both hands.

WOMAN Then I shall enter. How grateful I am! As I listen, the words of the sutra bring hope not only to a woman such as I but also

to insentient things like herbs and trees.

HERMIT You are indeed an intelligent listener. The great thing is to have a single mind filled with faith and gratitude, for then there is no room to doubt that even trees and herbs—nay all insentient things will attain salvation.

Turns towards her still holding the scroll.

WOMAN Indeed, a most blessed truth! Now, concerning the reason why trees and herbs can be saved,
Sir, I pray you, tell me more.

HERMIT The Parable of Medicinal Plants
Teaches us that all created things,
Be they possessed or not of sense,
Are all Reality.

*Turning again to wards the Front audience, the HERMIT looks at the sutra.
Turns towards the WOMAN.*

WOMAN The gale on the peak,

HERMIT The stream in the vale,

WOMAN and HERMIT

Preach Buddha's Way.

Our hearts have grown now crystal-clear

As waters in the temple well.

CHORUS “Setting the lamp behind us, we gaze up

The HERMIT rolls up the sutra and slips it back into his kimono.

age-uta at the moon,

Setting the lamp behind us, we gaze up at the moon,

To enjoy the beauty of advancing night.”¹

With obedient heart

From the master's lips

I learn the inmost meaning of the holy words.

A faith that naught can shake

Shows me how to escape from the ‘Burning House’¹

That, fondly, we are so loth to quit.

That “green are the willows and pink the blossoms,”²



To the unclouded eye reveals
That plants of varied hues and scents
Are part of Buddha's shining land,
Are part of Buddha's shining land.

5

CHORUS Is it not wonderful
rongi A seemingly untutored woman
Should have wit enough
To unravel the doctrine's knotty points
As clever fingers do a tangled skein?

WOMAN Its truth is clear beyond all doubt.
Did i not see the light to guide me
Here and in the future's gloomy ways,
I should not deem myself
Worthy of the Way most hard to meet.

CHORUS Happy it is to find the Way
So hard to meet,
To be born in the human world—
A fortune rare indeed!¹

The WOMAN rises and looks towards the Metsuke Pillar. During the following lines she starts moving slowly towards the Shite Seat.

WOMAN That you should think me human
CHORUS Makes me feel ashamed.
The full-orbed moon is shining bright
Upon my homeward path;
The garden is white as driven snow.
It you should pierce this vain form of mine
Unreal as *bashō* leaves in snow,²
How could I hide my shame?
While thus she voices her uneasy thoughts,
A distant temple bell tolls,
"All is ephemeral,"³
"All is ephemeral,"
And she fades away.



The WOMAN goes out.

INTERLUDE

The MAN OF THE PLACE enters the stage, wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe and trailing divided skirt, and short sword. Standing at the Shite Seat he tells the HERMIT that he has come to hear him read the sutra. Coming to the centre of the stage he sits down and enters into conversation with the hermit who questions him about the words "bashō leaves in snow." The MAN then tells the anecdote about a poet-painter who depicted a bashō-tree the snow and explains that its leaves symbolize unreality.



PART TWO

1

HERMIT The woman said her form was deceptive—unreal as *bashō* leaves in snow. Now I know for sure that the spirit of a *bashō-tree*—marvellous to tell—appeared to me in the likeness of a woman.

machi-utai The sutra worked that wonder,
The sutra worked that wonder!
Pondering upon this marvel
Fervently I read the sutra through the night;
Brighter and brighter grows the moon,
While the *bashō* leaves waft abroad
The Sacred Words.

2

While the entrance music *issei* is being played, the SPIRIT OF THE BASHŌ-TREE appears and advances on to the stage, taking up her position at the Shite Seat. She wears a Fukai mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, dancing *chōken* robe and scarlet broad divided skirt.

SPIRIT See how the garden gleams in the pure light,
See how the garden gleams in the pure light!
Grateful am I, for, though the Blessed Law
Is rare as *udambara*¹ flowers,
Yet the Sacred Words
Fell like blessed rain on the *bashō-tree*.
See me now clothed in mortal shape,



Turns towards the HERMIT.

issei Yet in this disguise
I am indeed a flowerless plant—

Turns towards the Front audience

CHORUS An old *bashō-tree* such as you may find
SPIRIT In any garden, field or hillside nook.

3

HERMIT Watching and waiting all the night
At last a form appears
In likeness of my evening guest.
Come, woman! Who are you?



SPIRIT I am not worthy of the name of woman. In truth I am an
insentient being,
A *bashō-tree* changed into woman.

HERMIT A *bashō-tree* changed into woman?
But through what cause
Are you now clad in female form?

SPIRIT You have no cause to marvel. No dividing line separates
being from being.

HERMIT Earth, herbs and trees

SPIRIT Receive from heaven the selfsame dew and rain;

HERMIT Though unawares,
Beings that cannot feel,

SPIRIT Through them do grow and flourish.

HERMIT Transformed because of this

SPIRIT Into a foolish woman—
CHORUS A frail thing, at best,—
age-uta While still remaining a *bashō-tree*.
The robe I wear is not pale blue¹
Which soon does fade;
Its sleeves are sadly torn.
What a disgrace!



4

CHORUS Even non-sentient trees and herbs
kuri Share Absolute Reality.

The SPIRIT stands in front of the Orchestra.

To the human mind
—A grain of dust, itself a universe¹—
As water takes the form
Of rain or dew, or frost or snow,
So Reality does clothe itself
In countless forms.

SPIRIT *sashi* A spray of flowers offered to Buddha

CHORUS Declares the Law that sways the world.

Lo! "A single bud unfolds
And spring has come for all."²

Under the warm rays of the spring sun
Willow and plum, damson and peach,

SPIRIT All blossom, and their varied hues and scents

Ravish men's hearts,

CHORUS And yet all these are one, not separate,
Since every being shares the same reality.



The SPIRIT dances while the following lines are chanted.

kuse "The lofty palace by the water's edge
First catches the rising moon;
The budding trees that face the south
First greet the advancing spring."³

The works of Nature and its laws,
Displayed before the eye, delight the soul.
The spring goes by, the summer's passed;
Stirring the garden reeds,
The breezes murmur that lonely
autumn's here.

Like ferns on ruined temple eaves,
No sweet memories of glories past
Can the *bashō-tree* recall for comfort;
Like trembling dew-drops
Tomorrow she may pass away;
Her heart feels autumn's doom
As poignantly as insects crying in the
grass.

SPIRIT The elusiveness of life
Brings to my mind the
dream

CHORUS Of the stag and the
bashō leaf;¹

In vain does
the stag's
cry pierce
men,
dreams.

The Western
Mountain
calls our
souls,
Yet only few
follow the
westering
moon.

Like bamboo-grasses tossed by autumn winds,
My mind is troubled
And I will rise and dance.



SPIRIT To-night,
Under the silvery moon

CHORUS Ice my robe,
Frost my skirt,

The SPIRIT performs a jo-no-mai dance.

Warp of frost,
And woof of dew,
Gossamer-frail my robe.¹



6

CHORUS My sleeves of frail *bashō* leaves

Dances while the following lines are chanted.

SPIRIT Are firm and deathless like the wings,

CHORUS Are firm and deathless like the wings
Of the blest heavenly maidens.²

SPIRIT Like them I wave my leafy sleeves

CHORUS Fanned by the rising winds
Which blow across the temple courts
O'ergrown with *karukaya*³ and *omina-eshi*.⁴

The wind becomes a gale,
And racing downwards bends the
pines,

And tears up flowers and grasses,
And tears up flowers and grasses.

Alone stands the *bashō*.

Its leaves all torn to shreds.



The SPIRIT stamps twice at the Shite Seat.

Footnotes

¹ *Musa Basjoo*, a banana-like plant with large leaves found in southern Japan.

¹ I.e. Hsiang-hsui (湘水). 'So' is the Japanese for 'Tsu.'

¹ Quotation from a poem by Tu Sun-he (杜荀鶴) of the T'ang dynasty.

[2](#) Allusion to a parable in the "Book of the Five Hundred Disciples Receiving Buddha's Testimonial concerning their Future Buddhahood (第百弟子受記品)" in the *Lotus Sutra*. The parable tells how a man who was being entertained at a friend's house got drunk and fell asleep. Being called away to a remote country on urgent public business, before his departure, he sewed a priceless gem into the lining of his friend's garment. The latter also went off to another country and, having become very poor, had to earn his living by doing manual labour. After many years the friends met. Seeing his wretched condition, he told the latter about the gem which was still in the lining of his garment and that, had his friend only known, it would have saved him from all his misery. The gem is a symbol of the Buddha-nature found in every creature.

[1](#) Set phrase in praise of every Buddhist sutra. The verses to be recited before reading a sutra (關經偈) aloud read: "This is the most high, most deep and most excellent Law, which is hard to meet in a hundred, a thousand, nay, ten thousand *kalpas*. Now that I am enabled to see, hear, and cherish it, may I also understand Buddha's real meaning."

[1](#) See *Tamura*, p. 32, note 1.

[2](#) Quotation from a sixteen-line poem by Tu Fu's (杜甫 eighth century Chinese poet) entitled "The Temple of Fa-ching (法鏡寺)," which begins with:

My personal safety being threatened,
I am seeking refuge in another province;
I try to minimize the trouble.
But after all journey means pain, followed by the lines quoted.

[3](#) In the original the four lines form a couplet by Po Chu-i (白居易 eighth century Chinese poet) quoted in the *Wakan Rōeishū*. Mt. Rosan is the Japanese for Mt. Lu-shan.

[1](#) First half of a couplet by Po Chu-i contained in the *Wakan Rōeishū*. The second half reads:

Treading the fallen flowers,
We lament the passing spring of our youth.

[1](#) In the 'Parable of the Burning House' (see *Tōboku*, p. 85, note 3) it is written: "These three worlds are all unsafe, like a burning house; they are filled with a multitude of dreadful pains."

[2](#) Common Zen Buddhist saying that expresses the identity of the phenomenal and the real. As Su Tung-po (蘇東坡 eleventh century Chinese poet) puts it:

The willows are green and the peach-blossoms are pink;
They appear in their real aspect.

[1](#) It is a common Buddhist saying that the state of human beings is extremely difficult to acquire because it is the result of innumerable good deeds in past existences, and is even better than the lot of heavenly beings; for while the latter are free from all pain and so lead too easy a life, the former are subject to frequent sufferings and sorrows which awaken in the mind the desire for salvation.

2 Allusion to an anecdote about Wang Wei (王維 eighth century Chinese poet and painter) who is said to have painted a green *bashō*-tree covered with snow, an impossibility since its leaves wither in winter. Here it is used as a metaphor for the illusory nature of the heroine's female form.

3 Buddhist temple bells are tolled at daybreak and sunset to warn the world of the transitoriness of all things.

1 See *Sanemori*' p. 45, note 2.

1 In ancient Japan light-blue dye was obtained from the flowers of the *tsuyukusa* grass (*Commelina communis*), which was therefore called the 'flower-dye.' It faded very quickly.

1 The *obiter dicta* of Yuan-wu (圓悟; twelfth century Chinese Zen abbot) contains the saying: "A grain of dust contains the universe; a split second grasps the whole world."

2 In the Ojō Koshiki (Ritual for Invoking Rebirth in the Pure Land) it is written: "If a single bud unfolds, spring comes for all; if the mind once aspires to the Way, the whole world becomes the Way."

3 Quotation from Su Lin (蘇麟 Chinese poet of the Sung dynasty).

1 Allusion to a tale in *Lieh-tse* (列子) written by a Chinese philosopher of the same name, telling how once a wood-cutter on a hill saw a stag running past and killed it. Fearing some one might steal it, he hid it in a ditch under a *bashō* leaf. But he soon forgot the place and when, after fruitless attempts, he was unable to find it again, came to the conclusion it must have only been a dream.

1 Quotation from Fujiwara-no-Sekio's poem in the *Kokinshū* which reads as follows:

The brocade robe of the autumn hill,
Being of warp of frost and woof of dew
Hardly is it woven than it goes to pieces
Because the material is so frail.

2 From the transcendental point of view, no distinction is to be made between the two.

3 I. e. *Themeda triandra*, a sedge-like grass common in open fields.

4 I. e. *Patrinia scabiosaefolia*, an autumn plant with clusters of tiny yellow flowers.

SUMIDAGAWA

(THE SUMIDA RIVER)



CHORUS How far I have come from home!
—Scene 3.

INTRODUCTION

Sumidagawa belongs to that division of the Fourth Group plays known as *kyōjo-mono* or 'mad woman' piece. When they are bereaved mothers, the heroines in this division are represented as abnormally sensitive and peculiarly susceptible to their surroundings, and fall into fits of poetic exaltation which expresses itself by frenzied gestures. When their lost ones are found, their temporary madness leaves them. In this particular piece, however, the heroine discovers her lost child to be dead and the play ends on a tragic note, not usual in 'mad woman' pieces.

The scene is laid on both banks of the river Sumida and on the river itself. The place where the incident is supposed to have occurred is situated on the river near the present Asakusa in Tokyo which was then open country. As the Sumida ferryman is about to row across, a traveller appears, who asks to be ferried over, and is followed shortly after by a distraught mother who, for many months, has been seeking her only child. It is a spring evening. At the sight of white birds floating here and there on the river, the mad woman recalls a poem in the *Ise Monogatari*, which awakens in her a frenzied longing for her child, which finds dramatic expression in a *kakeri* dance.

The scene that follows takes place on the ferry. Questioned as to the meaning of the solemn chanting across the river, the ferryman tells the traveller that on that very day a year before a kidnapped boy was struck down by sudden illness, and was left by the slaver to die on the roadside. The kind-hearted villagers who subsequently buried him on the bank of the river are now holding a memorial service for the repose of his soul. Hearing the sad story, the mad woman guesses that the child is indeed her long-sought boy and that she has reached the end of her quest. In the concluding scene the grieving mother is led to a grassy mound by a willow-tree under

which the child was buried, and is asked by the villagers to lead their prayers to Amida Buddha. While they are chanting, the child repeatedly appears before her eyes, only to fade away every time she attempts to clasp him in her arms. Finally as dawn breaks, the ghost vanishes for ever into the mound, leaving her disconsolate.

Author: Jūrō Motomasa (1395-1459), son of Zeami Motokiyo.

Source: None has as yet been ascertained. It seems likely that the author based his plot on some ancient legend or contemporary incident.

SUMIDAGAWA

Persons

FERRYMAN OF THE SUMIDA RIVER	<i>Waki</i>
TRAVELLER FROM MIYAKO	<i>Waki-zure</i>
MOTHER, A MAD WOMAN	<i>Shite</i>
GHOST OF UMEWAKA-MARU, HER CHILD	<i>Kokata</i>

Place

Sumida River, Musashi Province

Season

Spring

Stage-attendants place a framework mound covered with willow branches in front of the Orchestra' inside which the ghost-child is hidden.

1

While the entrance music nanoribue is being played, the FERRYMAN OF THE SUMIDA RIVER enters the stage and stands at the Shite Seat. He wears a striped kimono, suō robe and trailing divided skirt.

FERRYMAN I am he who rows the ferry across the Sumida in the province of Musashi. To-day I must quickly ferry people across the water because we are holding a solemn memorial service¹ for someone at the village on the other side of the river where both priest and laymen are gathering in great numbers. Mark this well, all of you!

Sits down in front of the CHORUS.

2

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the TRAVELLER FROM MIYAKO enters with a mushroom hat on. He wears a striped kimono, kakesuō robe and white broad divided skirt.



TRAVELLER To the far Eastland I am bound,
shidai To the far Eastland I am bound;
Tedious days of travel lie before me.

CHORUS To the far Eastland I am bound;
jidori Tedious days of travel lie before me.

TRAVELLER I come from Miyako. I have a friend in the
Eastland and now I am going there to visit him.



Removes his hat.

michi-yuki Behind me wrapt in clouds and mists

Puts it on again...

Lie the mountains I have crossed,
Lie the mountains I have crossed.
Many a barrier have I passed through,
Many a province have I traversed.
Here lies the far-famed Sumida,
And now I have reached the ferry,
And now I have reached the ferry.

Removes his hat.

Travelling in haste, here I am at the
Sumida ferry and over there I see a ferry-
boat about to leave. I will make haste and
board it. Hi boatman! I want to get in your
boat.

FERRYMAN All right sir! Get in. But first may I
ask you what is the meaning of that



unusual noise from where you have just come?

Rises

TRAVELLER It is a crazy woman from Miyako and people are amused by her mad dancing.

FERRYMAN Then I will delay the ferry-boat for a while and wait for the mad creature.

Sits on the Waki Seat to the right of the TRAVELLER.

3

While the entrance music issei is being played, the MOTHER appears and stops on the Bridgeway by the First Pine. She wears a Fukai mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, embroidered koshimaki outer-kimono, broad-sleeved robe. She has on a mushroom hat, and carries a spray of bamboo.

MOTHER "Although a mother's mind
sashi May be unclouded,
She well may lose her way
Through love of her child."¹
How true that is!
Where does my darling stray?
Shall I ask these travellers?
Does he know his mother's grief?
"Does not the skyey wind

CHORUS Whisper to the waiting pines?"²

The MOTHER advances on to the stage and performs a kakeri dance.

MOTHER In this world fleeting like the dews
Upon Makuzu Field,¹

CHORUS Should I thus pass my days
Complaining of my bitter day?

MOTHER For many years I lived
sashi In Miyako, at Kita-Shirakawa;²





Then suddenly I lost my only child,
Kidnapped by a slaver.
They told me he was taken
Beyond the Ōsaka Barrier³
Eastwards, to far-off Azuma,⁴
Since when with mind distraught
I wander on my desperate quest,
Torn by longing for my boy.

Weeps,

CHORUS "Though he be a thousand miles away
sage-uta —'Tis said—a mother ne'er forgets her child,"⁵

age-uta And yet the bond of parenthood
Cannot survive the grave,
Cannot survive the grave.⁶

Ah! Woe is me

That even in this world I must be parted from
him

Like the "four young birds that left their nest."⁷

Will my weary quest end here?

Now I have reached the Sumida,

Now I have reached the Sumida

That flows between Musashi and Shimōsa.

MOTHER Pray, boatman. Let me get into the boat.

FERRYMAN Where are you from and where are you
going?

MOTHER From Miyako I have come in search of
someone.

FERRYMAN Since you are a woman of Miyako and mad
to boot, I will not take you aboard unless you
amuse us with one of your crazy dances.

MOTHER What a clumsy way of speaking! Since you are the Sumida
ferryman, you should have answered, "Come on board, for the
day is spent,"¹

Yet you refuse a passage
To me, a city lady.



How ill-becoming a Sumida
boatman

To speak so rudely!

FERRYMAN How like a woman of Miyako
to use such elegant language!

MOTHER Your words remind me of the
poem Narihira once composed at
this very spot.

"O, birds of Miyako,
If you are worthy of your name,
Tell me, does my love still live?"¹



O, boatman, yonder is a white bird not found in Miyako. What is
its name?

Turns towards the right.

FERRYMAN It is a sea-gull.

MOTHER How unpoetical! By the sea you may call it a gull or a plover or
whatever you will, but here by the Sumida river why not "Miyako-
bird?"

FERRYMAN Truly I was in the wrong!
Living in this famous place
'Twas thoughtless of me,
Instead of Miyako-bird,

MOTHER To call it sea-gull.

FERRYMAN So Narihira long ago

MOTHER Asked, "Is she still alive?"

FERRYMAN Remembering his lady in Miyako.

MOTHER Moved by like yearning,
I am seeking my lost child
In the Eastland.

FERRYMAN To long for a sweetheart,

MOTHER To seek after a lost child,

FERRYMAN Both spring

MOTHER From love.

CHORUS O, Miyako-bird, I too will ask you,

age-uta O, Miyako-bird, I too will ask you,

The MOTHER turns towards the Waki Front.

Is my dear child still living
Somewhere in the Eastland?
I ask and ask, but it will not answer.
Oh, rude Miyako-bird!
I'll call you 'rustic-bird.'



“By the River Horie
Where boats hurry past each other,
Miyako-birds utter their cries:”¹
There at Naniwa in the West,
Here by the Sumida in the East—
How far I have come from home!
But, pray, O boatman,
Let me come on board.
Though crowded be your boat,
O, let me too on board, I pray!



FERRYMAN So sensible a mad woman I never saw. Be quick and
come aboard. This is a dangerous crossing; please take care
and sit still. You too, traveller, get in.

She goes to the First Pine and touching the brim of her hat gazes into the distance.

Returning from the Bridgeway, she goes up to the FERRYMAN and dropping the spray of bamboo' joins her hands in supplication.

Slips his right arm out of his kimono and picks up his pole.

The MOTHER removes her hat and holding it in her left hand, steps forward as if getting into a boat and sits down. The TRAVELLER sits sideways behind the MOTHER while the FERRYMAN stands at the back and plies his pole.

4

TRAVELLER Why are all those people gathered together over there,
under that willow-tree?

FERRYMAN They are holding a solemn memorial service connected
with a sad tale which I shall tell you while the boat is crossing
to the other side.

katari It happened last year, on the fifteenth of the third month; yes, and this is the very day on which it happened. A slave-trader was on his way to the Northeast, taking along with him a boy he had bought—a tender lad some twelve years old. Wearing out by the unaccustomed hardships of the road, the boy was seized with a mortal illness. He was so weak, he said he could not drag himself a step farther, and lay down on the bank. What heartless men there are in this world! The slaver abandoned the boy by the roadside and went on his way.



But the people of this neighbourhood, judging from his appearance that the lad was of gentle birth, nursed and tended him as best they could. But perhaps because of his *karma*, he grew worse and worse. When he was at the point of death, we asked him, "Where were you born, who are you?" "I was born in Miyako—he replied—at Kita-Shirakawa, the only child of Lord Yoshida. My father being dead, mother and I lived alone. Then I was kidnapped and now am brought to this pass. Please bury me here by the roadside, so that passers-by coming- from dear Miyako may at least cast their shadow over my grave: and plant a willow-tree in memory of me." He said these words, calmly, like a man; invoked Amida Buddha several times, and died. What a piteous happening!

There may be some people from Miyako in this boat. Let them offer prayers for the repose of his poor soul, even if they are not relations of the dead lad. Look! While you were listening to my long and tedious tale, the ferry has reached the bank. Make haste and land!

The MOTHER weeps.

TRAVELLER I will surely remain here to-day and though I had nothing to do with the lad, I will offer up a prayer for him.

Going to the Waki Seat, addresses the FERRYMAN and then sits down.

FERRYMAN Come, my mad creature there! Why not get out of my boat? Hurry! How tender-hearted of you to shed tears over such a story. Please get out of the boat quickly!

Turns and looks at the weeping MOTHER.



MOTHER Boatman, when did the event you have just told us take place?

Turns to the FERRYMAN.

FERRYMAN It took place last year, in the third month, on this very day.

MOTHER What was the lad's age?

FERRYMAN Twelve.

MOTHER His name?

FERRYMAN Umewaka-maru.

MOTHER And his father's name?

FERRYMAN Lord Yoshida.

MOTHER Since then have neither of his parents been here?

FERRYMAN Nor any of his kin.

MOTHER Much less his mother!

FERRYMAN No, that would have been out of the question.

MOTHER No wonder, neither Kin nor parent came.

He was the child

This mad woman is seeking.

Is this a dream?

O cruel fate!

Lets fall her hat and weeps.

FERRYMAN Who on earth could have dreamt of such a thing? Until now I thought it was none of our business. The boy was your child. You are to be pitied! Now let me show you where the boy is buried. Please come with me.



Puts away his bole and standing behind her, helps her out of the boat, then takes a few steps towards the mound.

Ferryman This is the grave of your dead child. Pray for his soul's repose, as only you can do.

Goes to the Waki Seat and sits down.

MOTHER I had hoped against hope
To find my child

Moves to the left, half facing the mound and sits gazing at it.



And now I have reached strange
Azuma,
He is no more upon this earth;
Naught but this mound remains.
O, how cruel!
Was it for this that he was born,
To be taken from his native land,
To the remotest part of Azuma,
Only to become dust by the roadside?
Does my dear child truly lie beneath this grass?

Half rises and fixes her eyes on the mound.

CHORUS O you people there,
sage-uta Dig up the sod
So that I may once again
Gaze on his mortal form.

The MOTHER turns towards the FERRYMAN and moves her hand as if to dig, then subsides on to the stage and weeps.

age-uta He whose life was full of promise is gone,
He whose life was full of promise is gone,
And she whose life is worthless left behind.
Before the mother's eyes the son appears
And fades away
As does the phantom broom-tree.¹



In this grief-laden world
Such is the course of human life.
The winds of death
Scatter the spring-time flowers of life;
The clouds of mutability
O'ercast the shining moon
That should light up the endless night of life and death.¹
Now my eyes see how fleeting is this life,
Now my eyes see how fleeting is this life.

6

FERRYMAN Your tears no longer serve; chant but your
prayers for his repose in the other world.

The moon has risen,
The river breeze is blowing,
The night is at its height,
'Tis time we began our night prayers.
Asking her to join them
They start to beat their gongs.



Stands up, holding a disc-like gong and a wooden hammer.

Striking his gong, turns towards the MOTHER.

MOTHER O'erwhelmed by grief
The mother cannot say her prayer,
But prostrate weeps upon the ground.

FERRYMAN This is not as it should be. However many people may
gather together, it is a mother's prayers that will rejoice her
dead child.

So saying he hands the gong to the mother.

*After giving her the gong and hammer, he takes his place in front of the
CHORUS.*

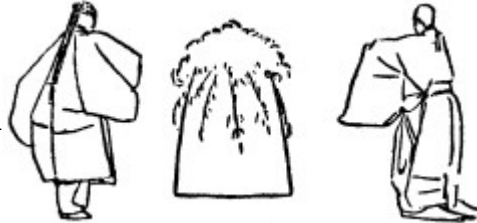
MOTHER You say true—
I'll take the gong
For my child's sake.

FERRYMAN Ceasing her moan, in a clear voice
MOTHER She prays with them under the shining moon.

Rises and faces the mound.

FERRYMAN Her thoughts wing straight
To the Western Land of Bliss.

FERRYMAN and MOTHER
Adoration to countless million
Buddhas—
Each one Amida
In the Western Paradise,¹
The world of supreme bliss!



Turning towards the mound, join their hands in prayer.

CHORUS Namu Amida! Namu Amida!
Namu Amida! Namu Amida!

The MOTHER beats the gong, accompanying the invocation.

MOTHER From the Sumida
Join in the voices
Of the breeze and waves.

CHORUS Namu Amida! Namu Amida!
Namu Amida!

MOTHER True to their name
Miyako-birds join the choir.

GHOST and CHORUS
Namu Amida! Namu Amida!
Namu Amida!



Faces the Front audience.

The voice of the GHOST of Umewaka-maru is heard from inside the mound.

MOTHER Surely just now among them I heard my child's voice. He
seems to be praying inside this mound.

Ceases to beat her gong.

FERRYMAN We, too, have heard your child. We shall keep silent; say your prayer alone.

MOTHER O that I might hear his voice but once again!
Namu Amida!

Turns towards the mound and strikes the gong.

GHOST Namu Amida! Namu Amida!

CHORUS See, his voice and shape!

The GHOST of Umewaka-maru comes out of the mound and stands in front of the Waki Seat. He wears a flowing black-hair wig, white broad-sleeved robe and white twill kimono.



MOTHER Is it you, my child?

GHOST Is it you, my mother?

CHORUS And as she seeks to grasp it by the hand,
The shape begins to fade away;
The vision fades and reappears
And stronger grows her yearning.
Day breaks in the eastern sky.
The ghost has vanished;
What seemed her boy
Is but a grassy mound
Lost on the wide, desolate moor.
Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts,
Sadness and tender pity fill all hearts!



Turns towards the MOTHER.

The MOTHER drops the gong and hammer and runs up to the GHOST, who retreats and re-enters the mound. Dazed and weeping' she looks up and moves two or three steps towards the Shite Pillar. The GHOST reappears and stands at the Shite Seat. With stretched arms the MOTHER runs towards it, and attempts to embrace it, but as the GHOST retreats again into the mound, the MOTHER falls, clasping the empty air. Rising again she approaches the mound, gazing at the willow branches, then, disconsolate, retreats slowly to the Shite Pillar and remains there weeping.

Footnotes

[1](#) The tomb of Umewaka is in the precincts of the Mokubo-ji, a small temple on the left bank of the river Sumida, roughly opposite the present Asakusa. Since the temple is believed to have been built after the present play became popular, it is very doubtful the tomb is really that of Umewaka.

[1](#) Poem by Fujiwara-no-Kanesuke contained in the *Gosenshū*,

[2](#) Poem by Lady Kunaikyō included in the *Shin Kokinshū*. In its complete form it reads:

Has he (the lover) not heard the saying,
That even the wind blowing
Through the upper regions of the sky
Does not disdain to visit the pine?

The word 'pine' has a double meaning of 'tree' and 'pining heart.'

[1](#) Field at the foot of Higashiyama Hill in Kyoto, where there is now Maruyama Park.

[2](#) Eastern suburbs of Miyako.

[3](#) See *Tamura*, p. 34, note 1.

[4](#) I.e. Eastland. See *Tamura*, p. 23, note 1.

[5](#) Quoted from a poem by Po Chu-i which more exactly reads: "A parent may go a thousand miles from home, but he never can forget his child."

[6](#) Due probably to a Buddhist theory it was currently believed that the bond between parent and child lasts only during the present life while that between man and wife endures for two lives.

[7](#) Allusion to a conversation between Confucius and Yen Hui (顔回) found in the *Words and Deeds of Confucius* (孔子家語) where it is told that once, very early in the morning, Confucius was sitting with his disciple Yen Hui. Hearing very mournful cries, the master enquired what they were, whereupon the pupil replied that they could not be lamentations over the dead, and told him the story of a bird which had built its nest on Mt. Han-shan. When the four young birds it had reared had grown up and prepared to leave the nest, the mother-bird had uttered heart-rending cries not unlike those they were now hearing. Upon enquiring from the neighbour it turned out that the master had died and that in order to defray his funeral expenses, the family had been obliged to sell one of the children into slavery, and were now about to part from him for ever. Confucius praises his pupil for his keenness in distinguishing voices.

[1](#) Quoted from the *Ise Monogatari*, chap, viii, where Narihira, the supposed author, describes his travels through the Eastland in search of a place to settle in,

after his life in Miyako had become too unpleasant. The chapter ends with his crossing the river Sumida.

[1](#) Quoted from the same. 'Miyako-bird' is a poetic name for sea-gull.

[1](#) Poem by Ōtomo-no-Yakamochi contained in the *Manyōshū*.

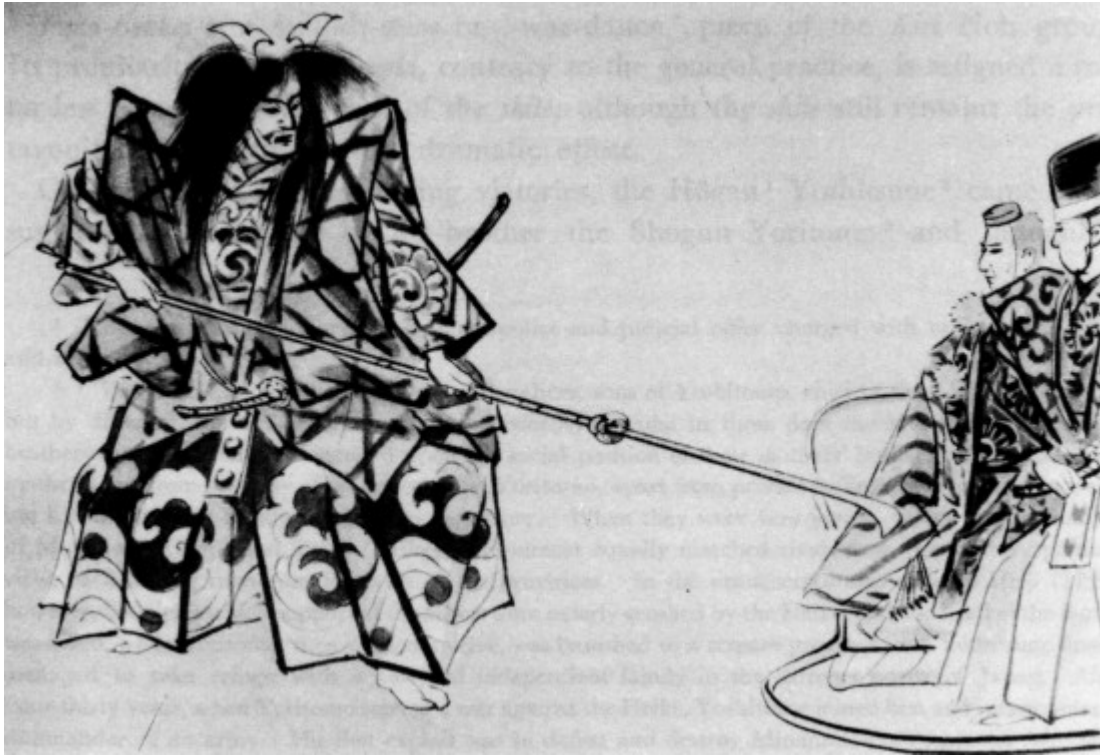
[1](#) Mythical tree shaped like a broom said to have stood in a village called Sonohara on the boundary between Shinano and Mino Provinces. It had the mysterious property of being seen clearly from afar, but of disappearing when anyone approached closer.

[1](#) The full moon is likened to Sakyamuni who dispels the darkness of ignorance and enlightens mortal minds.

[1](#) *Lung-shu Jodomon* (龍舒淨土文 Collection of Texts relating to the Western Paradise, edited in Lung-shu by a man of the Southern Sung dynasty) states that seeing an aged couple assiduously repeating the *nembutsu* prayer and using a bagful of seeds to mark the number of repetitions, Sakyamuni was filled with pity at their pious device, and taught them a better means of doing so by saying: "Namu to the thirty-six trillion, one hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred Amida Buddhas of the Western Paradise, all having the same name and title."

FUNA-BENKEI

(BENKEI IN THE BOAT)



TOMOMORI I, Tomomori,
CHORUS Will drag down Yoshitsune
Under the waves beneath which I sank.
—Part II' scene 5.

INTRODUCTION

Funa-Benkei is a *hataraki-mono* or 'war-dance' piece of the *Kiri Noh* group. Its peculiarity is that the *waki*, contrary to the general practice, is assigned a role no less important than that of the *shite*, although the *shite* still remains the protagonist, thus adding to the dramatic effect.

On account of his resounding victories, the Hōgan¹ Yoshitsune² came to be suspected of disloyalty by his brother the Shogun Yoritomo³ and thought it prudent secretly to leave Miyako for the Westland,¹ and there in safety to await the event.

The play consists of two parts: the first deals with the Hōgan's parting from his mistress Shizuka² at Daimotsu Bay³; the second with a very dramatic sea-fight between Benkei, his faithful retainer and the ghost of the drowned Tomo-mori,⁴ one of the Heike chiefs, who was attempting- to sink their boat in revenge for his defeat.

In Part One the *shite* is a beautiful lady who performs a *chū-no-mai* dance; that in Part Two the ghost of a warrior who performs a *hataraki* dance. The *waki* is played throughout by Benkei who preserves his lord's honour by causing Shizuka to return to Miyako, and afterwards saves his life by invoking the deities of the five quarters.¹ The Hōgan, a secondary role, is played by the *kokata* for, according to the conventions of the Noh drama, only two leading parts are allowed. In the present play the role of the *kyōgen* has an unusually dramatic significance in that he is the chief boatman upon whose convincing acting full realization of the storm scene mainly depends.

Author: Kwanze Kojirō Nobumitsu (1435-1516)

Source: *Heike Monogatari* (Tale of the Heike) and *Gempei Seisuiiki* (Rise and Fall of the Genji and the Heike) which give the details of the Hōgan's flight. The

source from which the author has derived the latter's separation from Shizuka and his encounter with Tomomori's ghost has not yet been ascertained.

FUNA-BENKEI

(BENKEI IN THE BOAT)

Persons

HŌGAN, MINAMOTO-NO-YOSHITSUNE	<i>Kokata</i>
MUSASHIBŌ BENKEI	<i>Waki</i>
THREE RETAINERS OF THE HŌGAN	<i>Waki-zure</i>
CHIEF BOATMAN	<i>Kyōgen</i>
LADY SHIZUKA	<i>Shite</i> in Part One
GHOST OF TAIRA-NO-TOMOMORI	<i>Shite</i> in Part Two

Place

Shore of Daimotsu Bay, Settsu Province (Part One)
Sea off Daimotsu Bay (Part Two)

Season

Autumn

PART ONE

1

While the entrance music shidai is being played, the HŌGAN with his Three Retainers and BENKEI appear and advance on to the stage. The HŌGAN wears a tall black cap, heavy silk kimono, soba-tsugi robe, white broad divided skirt and sword. BENKEI wears a small round cap, brocade stole, heavy silk kimono, broad-sleeved robe, white broad divided skirt, short sword and

carries a rosary of diamond-shaped beads. The Three Retainers wear costumes similar to those of their lord and short swords.

BENKEI and RETAINERS

shidai To-day we start upon our journey,
To-day we start upon our journey;
But when shall we see Miyako again?

CHORUS To-day we start upon our journey;

jiaori But when shall we see Miyako again?

BENKEI I am Musashibō Benkei of the Western Quarter.¹ My lord the Hōgan, as Yoritomo's Lieutenant, has vanquished the Heike clan. The relations between them should be brotherly as those of sun and moon, but to our deep regret some despicable mischief-maker² has sown discord between them. Out of regard for his brother, my lord is however leaving Miyako for a while and going down to the Westland, to send from there a petition to his brother proving his innocence. To-day before dawn he hastens to Yodo³ to take a boat for Amagasaki on the Bay or Daimotsu in the province of Settsu.



BENKEI and RETAINERS

sashi It is early in the era of Bunji;
Open discord has broken out
Between Yoritomo and Yoshitsune,
Uncertain what to do,

HŌGAN The Hōgan leaves Miyako,
And ere all roads are closed to him.¹
Westwards he makes his way

BENKEI and RETAINERS

And quits Miyako before dawn.
As the moon climbs the sky,
His thoughts linger behind.
Unlike when years ago² he started
hence



Against the rebel Heike troops,
Now with heavy heart he mounts the boat
With a small band of trusty followers.

sage-uta Uncertain is the lot of man,
As floating clouds and running water!

age-uta "In this world—
Say what people may,
Say what people may,
The God of Rock-spring knows
The man whose heart is pure."³
So towards his holy shrine from afar
Reverently we bow our heads.
And soon—where travellers' weary thoughts
Are swept away by waves and ebbing tides—
Daimotsu Bay is reached,
Daimotsu Bay is reached.

BENKEI Travelling in haste, we have now reached the shore or
Daimotsu Bay. As I have an acquaintance here, I will go and
ask him to give us shelter.

FIRST RETAINER
That will be good.

2

BENKEI Excuse me. Is the master of the house at home?

BENKEI goes to the Shite Pillar and turns towards the Bridgeway.

The BOATMAN, who is sitting at the kyōgen Seat, rises and goes to the First Pine, He wears a check-patterned Kimono, kyōgen robe and divided skirt.

BOATMAN Who is asking for me?

BENKEI Musashi is my name.

BOATMAN What brings you here this time?

BENKEI I have come with my lord. Please give him lodging.

BOATMAN With pleasure.

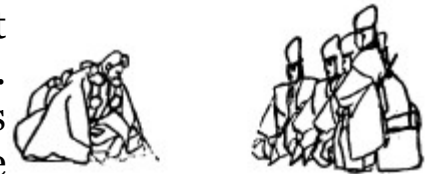
BENKEI As he is travelling incognito, please prepare the inner room for him and make ready a boat as well, because he must leave for the Westland.

BOATMAN Certainly. May it please your lordship, come into the inner room.

The HÖGAN and others go to the Waki Seat. The HÖGAN sits on a stool while BENKEI and RETAINERS sit near him on the floor in front of the CHORUS. The BOATMAN retires to the kyōgen Seat.

Approaching the HÖGAN, kneels down and bows deeply.

BENKEI May it please my lord, though I hesitate to mention it, I now see that Lady Shizuka is coming with us. Under the circumstances it seems unsuitable; it would be well if she were firmly ordered to return home.



HÖGAN Let Benkei deal with this matter as he thinks best.

BENKEI Very well, my lord. I will go to Lady Shizuka's lodgings and convey to her your lordship's decision.

3

BENKEI Ho, you there! Is Lady Shizuka staying in this house? Musashi comes as messenger from his lord.

Goes to the First Pine and speaks towards the Curtain.

LADY SHIZUKA *enters and advances to the Third Pine. She wears a 'young woman' mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono and brocade outer-kimono.*



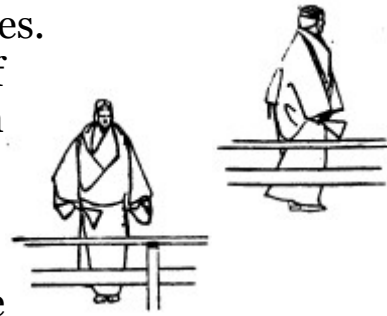
SHIZUKA Musashi? Little had I expected him! What matter brought your reverence here?

BENKEI The matter stands like this. My lord wishes you to know he greatly appreciates your coming all this way, but desires that

you should return to Miyako, as your presence is no longer becoming under the circumstances.

SHIZUKA I never should have expected this of him! I had determined to follow him wherever he might go.

However much you trust it,
The human heart proves fickle.
Alas! Your message has hurt me
deeply.



Weeps,

BENKEI What answer shall I take back to my lord?

SHIZUKA It my coming with him should cause him any trouble, then I will stay behind.

BENKEI You are taking the matter too seriously. But you should stay behind.

SHIZUKA The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that Musashi has made this up.—I will come myself to the HÖGAN and give him my answer.

BENKEI Do so if you wish. I shall accompany you.

4

BENKEI May it please my lord, Lady shizuka is here.

HÖGAN Listen to me, Shizuka. Though I have suddenly become a fugitive from Miyako, you have followed me as far as here. I duly appreciate your devotion. It would not be well, however, for you to travel far across the rough seas. Return to Miyako for the time Deins: and await me there.



LADY SHIZUKA and BENKEI advance to the centre of the stage and sit down.

SHIZUKA So that is truly my lord's will! How wrong? it was of me to have felt reproachful towards innocent Musashi!
Indeed I feel ashamed!

BENKEI No, no, do not mind about me, my lady. My lord only fears what people may say.

Think not his love has failed;
Thus says Benkei shedding tears.



SHIZUKA Nay, worthless creature that I am,
Even though forsaken,
I harbour no reproach;
But since you are about to sail the seas,

CHORUS How can my lord leave Shizuka behind,
age-uta How can my lord leave Shizuka behind,
Since 'shizuka' means calm weather?
The enduring troth we plighted
Calling the gods to witness
Has been of no avail;
"I hold my life more dear
Than parting from my lord,
For I would see my lord again
In days to come."¹



SHIZUKA *weeps.*

5

HÖGAN Here Benkei! Serve wine to Shizuka.

BENKEI Certainly, my lord. This cup of chrysanthemum wine, to speed him on his journey and wish my lord may live for countless years,
Benkei now offers to Shizuka.



With his fan, makes the gesture of filling her cup.

SHIZUKA Now I must leave my lord;
O'erwhelmed by endless sorrow,
Tears choke me

BENKEI And with good reason. But will you not sing a song of farewell And dance for him?

SHIZUKA Shizuka arises

And sings the song of leave-taking;
"The wind has dropped,
The ferry-boat leaves the haven;

CHORUS As the skies clear,
The land of exile looms across the waves."²

BENKEI Here is an *eboshi*. Pray put it on.

SHIZUKA *moves towards the Orchestra, sits down facing the Flute-player and puts, on a tall gold cap.*



6

SHIZUKA I have no heart to dance

CHORUS Because I feel ashamed to wave my sleeves.

SHIZUKA *rises and performs an iroe dance.*

SHIZUKA When Duke Tōshu, so goes the story,¹
sashi Followed King Kōsen to Mount Kwaikai,

CHORUS Many a clever strategem did he there devise²
Until at last he crushed the King of Go
And Kōsen could have his revenge.

SHIZUKA *dances while the following lines are chanted.*

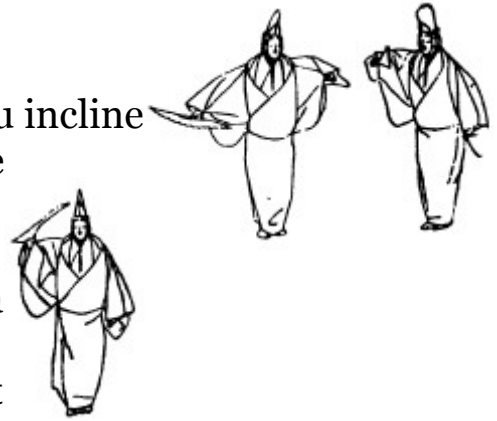
kuse When by his aid Kōsen had regained his realm
And wiped away the shame of Kwaikai,
As minister at Kōsen's court,
Duke Tōshu could have wielded boundless power,
And gained Highest honours and vast possessions.
Yet, since obedient to Heaven's decree
"The wise man should retire
When fame is reached and great deeds done,"³
Rowing a boat on the Five Lakes⁴
He found contentment among mists and waters.

SHIZUKA Of such examples history tells.

CHORUS Leaving the glorious Miyako,



If you seek safety o'er the western
waves,
There to plead your innocence,
Yoritomo will at last towards you incline
As willows bow before the
breeze.
How can brothers' love,
Close-knit as branches of a
willow-tree,
Decay and cease? "Have but
faith in me—



SHIZUKA *performs a chū-no-mai dance.*

SHIZUKA Have but faith in me,
Ye, who are like moxa-weeds on Shimeji Moor,
CHORUS While in this world I dwell!"¹
SHIZUKA If this great vow lie not,
CHORUS If this great vow lie not,

Turns towards BENKEI.

My lord will prosper in the world again.
Now must his boat set forth,
The rowers slip the moorings, crying 'Make haste,'
The rowers slip the moorings, crying 'Make haste!'
Thus urged, the Hōgan leaves his lodging;



The HŌGAN rises from the stool and takes two or three steps forward.

SHIZUKA Shizuka sobbing
CHORUS Lays aside her robe and cap;
Choking with tears she takes her leave;
O heart-rending sight,
O heart-rending sight !



SHIZUKA removes her cap.

The HŌGAN follows SHIZUKA with his eyes as she weeping leaves the stage, then seats himself again on the stool.

PART TWO



1

BOATMAN Lady Shizuka's sorrow at parting from her lord has made me cry, too. But he's right not to take her with him overseas, so as to stop people's tongues wagging. Now then, instead of muttering to myself, I should be informing Reverend Musashi that the boat is ready for Lord Hōgan. Please your honour, I too was moved to tears by the sight of Lady Shizuka's distress at having to leave. What does your reverence trunk?

Moves forward the Shite Pillar.

BENKEI I too have shed tears. But our lord is quite right not to take her with him overseas, since he is afraid of evil tongues. I think he has done well, don't you?

Goes and sits on the floor in front of BENKEI.

BOATMAN Yes, well, very well!

BENKEI Have you made ready the boat as I ordered?

BOATMAN Yes, I have. I have made ready a swift boat.

I can put out to sea at any time.

BENKEI Then we shall be starting very shortly.

BOATMAN Very well, your reverence.

Returns to the kyōgen Seat.

2

BENKEI I can well imagine how Lady Shizuka is feeling. But we must now put out to sea.

Rises

FIRST RETAINER

Musashi, I must speak with you.

BENKEI What is the matter?

FIRST RETAINER

The sea is getting rough, so it is his lordship's will to stop here for to-day.

BENKEI What? Has his lordship decided to stop?

FIRST RETAINER

Yes, that's a fact.

BENKEI I suspect his lordship is unwilling to part from Shizuka and therefore wishes to put off his departure. When you think of it, such a decision can only mean that his luck has run out. Once¹ while he was embarking at Watanabe² and Fukushima,³ it was blowing a gale. Still he ordered the boats to put out to sea and destroyed the Heike forces. We should do the same now,

And put our boat to sea without delay.

FIRST RETAINER

You are right.

Enemies lurk everywhere!

BENKEI The crew are noisy as the evening waves.

CHORUS *Eiya, eiya*, they cry as they push out the boat
Upon the darkling sea.

BOATMAN All aboard!

The BOATMAN hurries into the Mirror Room, bringing out a framework boat which he sets in front of the Waki Seat, with the bows facing the audience. Stepping into it, he stands at the stern. The HŌGAN gets into the boat and sits on a stool in the bows. BENKEI sits next to him while the RETAINERS sit as if they were in a boat.

3

BOATMAN Come, let us get under way. *Ei, ei ei. Ei, ei.* Your reverence, it is a matter for congratulation that the weather should be unusually fine for his lordship's departure.

Moves a bamboo pole back and forth as if towing.

BENKEI Yes, it is indeed unusually fine. I am well pleased.



BOATMAN And I have chosen my best rowers for my lord. What do you think of them, your reverence?

BENKEI I am well pleased with your fine crew.

BOATMAN I am glad they satisfy you. *Ei, ei, ei.* Reverend sir, I have a favour to ask of you.

BENKEI What is it?

BOATMAN Nothing very important. My lord goes down to the Westland because of his estrangement from Yoritomo, but since he is his brother, they should be reconciled soon, and there is no doubt his lordship will return to Miyako. In that case will you kindly put in a good word for me with his lordship so that I may be made controller of shipping for the western seas?

BENKEI That is a reasonable request for you to make. My lord will surely come into his own again and I will then see to it that you are appointed controller of shipping in the western seas.

BOATMAN I am very grateful to your reverence. When a lord is in need, his men are ready to make all kinds of promises, but once the need is over, they are liable to forget them. I hope you will not forget.

BENKEI No, Musashi never forgets!

BOATMAN Then since Reverend Musashi says so, my wish is as good as fulfilled. However, people say it is best to make assurance doubly sure, so please keep it in mind. *Ei, ei, ei.*

How strange! See that nasty-looking cloud, which has appeared over Mount Muko.¹ I had not noticed it before; that always means wind. I don't want wind to-day. *Ei, ei.* Clouds are rolling up fast, one after another; the wind has changed. The sea has turned rough.

Looks towards the Metsuke Pillar.

Ho, you rowers, do your best. *Ei, ei, ei.* So long as I am at the helm, however hard it may blow, the boat will hold its course in any sea. Never worry. *Ei, ei, ei.* A towering wave comes surging towards us. *Rya, rya, rya, rya. Wave, wave, wave. Shikare, shikare, shikare, shikare. Shih, shih, shih, shih Ei, ei, ei.* You

may think we are making a lot of noise, but waves are obedient and if we scold them they quiet down.

Slips his right arm out of his outer-kimono sleeve.

Looks towards the Waki Seat.

There, a huge wave is rising again. *Wave, wave, wave. Rya, rya, rya. Shikare, shikare, shikare, shikare. Shik, shih, shih, shih. Ei, ei, ei.*

Draws a wide arc with his pole to symbolize the waves.

BENKEI Woe is me! The wind has changed. With the wind blowing from Mount Muko and over the Peak of Yuzuriha,¹ there is no hope of getting our boat to shore. You all, from the bottom of your heart pray to gods and buddhas!



FIRST RETAINER

Musashi, this boat is possessed by an evil spirit.

BENKEI Please keep quiet. Such things should not be mentioned on board ship.

BOATMAN Ever since he came aboard, I knew that man would say something unlucky. Now, at last, he has come out with dreadful words. You mustn't speak of such things on an ill-omened boat.

BENKEI Come, come, he knows nothing about ships. Please forgive him for my sake.

BOATMAN If you risk, reverend sir, I'll say no more about it. But it was too bad of him to say such a thing. *Ei, ei, ei.* Again another towering wave comes surging towards us. *Rya, rya, rya. Wave, wave, wave. Shikare, shikare, shikare. Shih, shih, shih, shih. Ei, ei, ei.*

4

BENKEI O marvel!

Rises and looks towards the Curtain.

As I scan the sea,
The chieftains who perished in the West
Rise from the waves.

Taking advantage of our plight it is reasonable they should
appear to wreak their vengeance on us.

HÖGAN Benkei!

BENKEI At your service, my lord.

HÖGAN We need not be afraid. What harm could those evil spirits
do us?

The Heike clan
Defying gods and buddhas
Committed untold sins and crimes
And were by Heaven chastised
And drowned beneath the waves,—

CHORUS I see now the erstwhile emperor and his lords
Rising in swarms out of the sea.

5

While the entrance music haya-fue is being played, the GHOST of Tomomori enters with a halbert on his shoulder and stops at the Shite Seat and rests the butt of his halbert on the stage. He wears a crescent-shaped mask, flowing black-hair wig, and golden horns' heavy silk kimono, gold-brocade robe, divided skirt and sword.

TOMOMORI Behold me!

I am the ghost of Taira-no-Tomomori,
Scion of the Emperor Kammu,
In the ninth generation.
Hail, Yoshitsune!
I have come
Guided by your oarsmen's voices,

CHORUS As your boat cleaves
The waters of Daimotsu Bay,
As your boat cleaves
The waters of Daimotsu Bay.



TOMOMORI I, Tomomori,

Addresses the HÖGAN who puts his hand to his sword.

The GHOST moves towards the front of the stage.

CHORUS Will drag down Yoshitsune
Under the waves beneath which I sank.
Grasping his halbert,
He whirls it round him like a Han,
Churning up the waves
And belching forth noisome vapours.
Dizzy-eyed and mind distraught.
None know where they are.



The GHOST dances while the following lines are chanted.

The GHOST dances a hataraki dance.

6

HÖGAN But Yoshitsune, undismayed,

CHORUS But Yoshitsune, undismayed,

The HÖGAN draws his sword.

Draws his sword;
As if he were a man
He challenges him to combat.

The HÖGAN and the GHOST fight.

Then they engage, but Benkei
thrusts between, saying:
"Swords are of no avail,"
And rubs the beads between his
hands.
From the east he invokes

Gozanze Myōō,¹

From the south Gundari Yasha Myōō,



From the west Dai Itoku Myōō,
From the north Kongō Yasha
Myōō,

And in the centre Fudō Myōō
And calls upon that Great King

To bind the evil
spirits with his
sacred rope.

As one by one
they all fall
back,

Benkei aids the
rowers

To speed his master's boat
And bring it safe to shore.

The still-pursuing spirits are put to flight
By Benkei's prayers;

Then on the tide they drift away

Leaving no trace upon the foaming
waves.



*The ghost retreats to the Third Pine, then throwing
away his halbert and drawing his sword, he again
moves towards the Hōgan.*

The ^{Ghost} returns to the Third Pine and stamps twice.

Footnotes

[1](#) Title given to a secondary officer in the police and judicial office charged with maintaining peace and order in Miyako.

[2](#), [3](#) Yoritomo and Yoshitsune were half-brothers, sons of Yoshitomo, chief of the Minamoto family, but by different mothers, a circumstance noteworthy because in those days the relative importance of brothers in a noble family depended upon the social position of their mothers' families. As Yoshitsune's mother came from a family of no importance, Yoritomo, apart from private feelings, was justified in treating his half-brother hardly better than a retainer. When they were very young, the two great families of Minamoto (Genji) and Taira (Heike) were almost equally

matched rivals from the military point of view, each having numerous followers in the provinces. In the unsuccessful *coup d'état* of Heiji (1159), however, the Genji which supported the rebels were utterly crushed by the Heike, and the head of the family was killed, while Yoritomo, then a boy of twelve, was banished to a remote province, and Yoshitsune finally managed to take refuge with a powerful independent family in the extreme north of Japan. After some thirty years, when Yoritomo started a war against the Heike, Yoshitsune joined him and was appointed commander of an army. His first exploit was to defeat and destroy Minamoto-no-Yoshinaka (see *Sane-mori*, p. 39, note 1) who, having started on a separate campaign, anticipated Yoritomo's armies in entry into Miyako and made the Imperial court confer on him the title of Shogun.

The Heike routed from the capital, fled to the provinces bordering on the Inland Sea, taking with them the infant emperor. It was chiefly due to Yoshitsune's brilliant generalship that after fifteen months during which he inflicted two signal defeats on them at Ichinotani near Kobe, and at Yashima near Taka-matsu in Shikoku, the Heike were totally annihilated in the Straits of Bakan. Despite these exploits discord was destined to break out between the brothers. Determined to quell the proud and insubordinate to his own authority, Yoritomo forbade his followers to receive any appointments or honours from the Emperor except at his recommendation. Yoshitsune, however, presuming upon his blood-relationship, allowed himself to be appointed Hōgan without Yoritomo's permission.

This breach of discipline highly angered the Shogun and when Yoshitsune took the most important Heike captives—including the head of the family and his heir—down to Kamakura, then the seat of the Shogunate, he was forbidden to enter that town, much less to see his elder brother. His repeated apologies and petitions having failed to appease Yoritomo, Yoshitsune in turn naturally became angry, and threatened to become the leader of those, whether at court or among the military, who were discontent with the Kamakura government. Two attempts were made upon his life by envoys sent to Miyako by the Kamakura government on specious missions. Finding it unsafe to remain longer in Miyako, Yoshitsune, accompanied by a handful of personal retainers and his faithful mistress Shizuka, went down to Osaka in order to take boat from there to Kyūshū and thus place himself in safety.

1 In its broad sense, the Westland refers to the provinces west of Miyako but in the present case it specifically means the island of Kyūshū.

2 Dancer (late twelfth century) who was the daughter of Iso-no-Zenji of the same profession. The mother is said to have started the new style of solo dancing called *shira-byōshi* (white-robed singing and dancing) which soon became the fashion in Miyako. The cleverest artistes of this school were patronized by the nobility as in the case of the Giō and Gijo sisters and later of Hotoke who became ladies of Taira-no-Kiyomori's harem (*The Heike Monogatari*, Vol. I). While Hōgan in Miyako, Yoshitsune was captivated by Shizuka's beauty and art, and made her his mistress. When Tosabō Shōshun, an emissary from Kamakura, tried with a party of

warriors to murder Yoshitsune in a treacherous night attack on his mansion, Shizuka's vigilance and courage were mainly responsible for saving her lord's life. Later she accompanied him on his unsuccessful journey to Kyūshū. The present play is based on the latter event and, although according to it she was prevented from embarking at Daimotsu Bay, she is mentioned in a fourteenth century version of the story (*Gikeiki*, i.e. History of Yoshitsune) as having been in one of the boats when a sudden storm frustrated Yoshitsune's plan of sailing to the Westland. Subsequently she was one of the small party of followers who sought sanctuary with him in the Yoshino Mountains. When the Hōgan decided to undertake a perilous journey to the north disguised as a 'mountain ascetic,' Shizuka was sent home to her mother accompanied by two or three servants who, however, robbed her of all valuable parting gifts given her by Yoshitsune and treacherously deserted her in the wilderness. She then fell into the hands of monks belonging to a Buddhist monastery who were eager to curry favour with the Kamakura government by capturing Yoshitsune. Finally, when sent down to Kamakura to be questioned as to the whereabouts of her lord, Shizuka firmly refused to give him away, and having been found with child by Yoshitsune, was detained at Kamakura till after her accouchement. Meanwhile Yoritomo's wife Masako, having heard of her fame as a dancer, wished her to perform before Yoritomo and his retinue at one of the Hachiman shrines. Though reluctantly, Shizuka consented to display her art to the great admiration of the audience, but at an encore she boldly expressed her longing for her lord by singing two ancient poems which voiced similar sentiments to the great displeasure of Yoritomo, but escaped punishment thanks to his wife's entreaties (the above incident is touched upon in a Noh play entitled *Futari Shizuka*, i.e. Double Shizuka). In due course she gave birth to a boy who was snatched from her and drowned in the sea of Kamakura. What happened to her subsequently has not been recorded.

3 Bay situated to the southwest of Amagasaki, Settsu Province.

4 Fourth son of Kiyomori. Pre-eminent in wisdom and valour, he was the right-hand man of Munemori, Kiyomori's unworthy successor. When Prince Mochihito was rallying the disaffected elements Tomomori quickly nipped the movement in the bud, slaying the prince and other leaders at the battle of Uji and destroying the Genji in the neighbouring province of Ōmi. When, alarmed by the rapid advance of Yoshinaka on Miyako, it was proposed to move the Imperial capital to Fukunara near Kobe, Tomomori opposed this cowardly plan, insisting that they should defend the capital to the last. His counsel, however, did not prevail, and when the removal was carried out it was found that the Imperial party was reduced to the infant emperor, grandson of Kiyomori, and to the Imperial dowager, his daughter and the Heike nobles. In 1184, less than two years later, the Heike were annihilated at the Straits of Bakan and, seeing that all was lost, Tomomori persuaded Kiyomori's widow to throw herself into the sea together with the emperor in order to avoid the disgrace of captivity. Munemori also plunged into the

sea, but being a good swimmer he kept afloat and was captured. Angered at this shameful slight to the honour of a military family, Tomomori with his sword put an end to his own life.

1 See p. 182, note 1.

1 Mt. Hiei near Kyoto, headquarters of the Tendai sect of Buddhism since the ninth century, once numbered several hundred temples and monasteries. These were divided into three groups, of which the Western Quarter was one, the others being the Eastern Quarter and the Yokawa Quarter.

2 Refers to Kajiwara-no-Kagetoki, an influential Genji captain under Yoshitsune when the latter commanded one of the Genji expeditionary armies against the Heike. During the council of war held on the eve of the battle of Yashima in Shikoku, a fierce quarrel broke out between them. Harboring resentment against his general, on his return to Kamakura, Kagetoki slandered Yoshitsune to his elder brother the Shogun Yoritomo, thus causing the brothers to become estranged.

3 See *Eguchi*, p. 114, note 1

1 Yoritomo, jealous of his brother's fame, determined to get rid of him. Several attempts on his life having already been made, it was now feared, as later events were to prove, that Government orders would be issued to the lords responsible for guarding the barriers on the principal roads to examine strictly all travellers in order to intercept Yoshitsune and his followers.

2 I.e. 1185 when Yoshitsune was preparing to attack the Heike at Yashima in the Inland Sea.

3 Poem attributed to the God of the Iwashimizu (rock-spring) Temple in the southern suburbs of Kyoto.

1 Quoted from a poem by Fujiwara-no-Kintō contained in the *Senzaishū*.

2 Chinese poem from the *Wakan Rōeishū* by Ono-no-Takamura, the best poet in eighth century Japan, who was equally skilled in the composition of Japanese and Chinese verse. The lines quoted were written when he was banished to the islands of Oki in the Japan Sea as a punishment for disobeying Government orders.

1 T'ao Chu-kung (陶朱公) chief councillor to King Kosen (Kou-chien 句踐) of Yueh (越) in South China (fifth century B.C.). A hereditary feud exists between Yueh and the neighbouring kingdom of Go (Wu 吳) ruled by Fusa (Fu Ch'a; 夫差) In a pitched battle fought at the foot of Mt. Kwaikai (K'uai-chi 會稽) King Kou-chien suffered a crushing defeat and life was spared only on condition that his kingdom should become a vassal state of Wu. For the next twenty years, at the advice of his minister T'ao Chu-kung, Kou-chien endured every kind of humiliation in his attempts to conciliate the King of Wu. At the same time he never for a moment lost sight of his secret plan to revenge himself and regain his kingdom. Finally he successfully invaded the kingdom of Wu, killed his old enemy, and annexed his territories.

[2](#) Inaccurate statement, as indicated in the preceding note.

[3](#) Quoted from Lao-tse (老子): "Gold and gems may fill one's hall, but they cannot be possessed for long; if anyone becomes proud of his wealth and honours, he will soon run into misfortune. It is in accordance with Heaven's decree to go into retirement when one has attained success and fame.

[4](#) Another name for T'ai-hu (太湖) a lake in the province of Chiang-su (江蘇).

[1](#) See *Tamura*, p. 30, note 1.

[1](#) i.e. 1185. See p. 169, note 2.

[2, 3](#) Both places are now part of the city of Osaka.

[1](#) Mountain outside Kobe, now called Rokkō.

[1](#) Mountain on Awaji Island in the Inland Sea.

[1](#) *Myōō* (Divya raja) are incarnations of Buddha as the 'Body of Law., They assume fierce and terrifying forms in order to quell men of a stubborn evil nature. The five most powerful of these kings are especially venerated by the Japanese sect of 'mountain ascetics.' four are enthroned in each of the four quarters, while the fifth, i.e. Fudō (Acalanatha), occupies the centre. Fudo is represented holding in his right hand a sword symbolizing wisdom and in his left a rope symbolizing mercy, and is surrounded by flames, which have a virtue of consuming all evil thoughts and passions.

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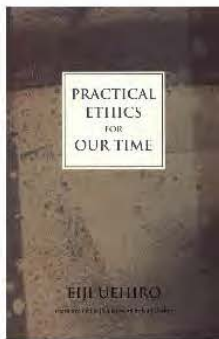
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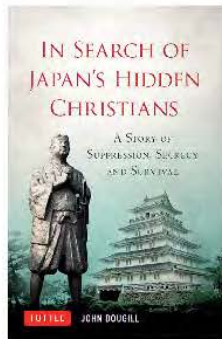
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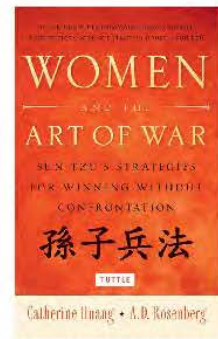
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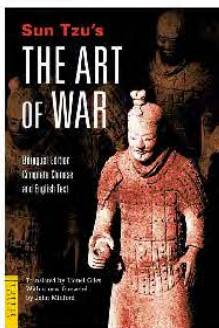
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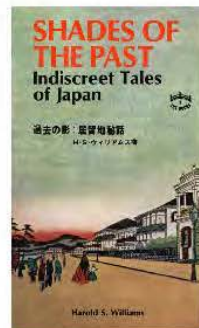
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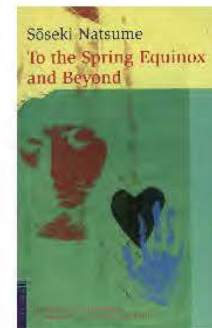
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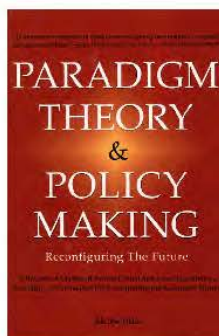
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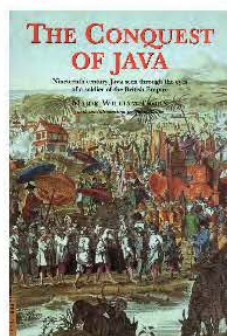
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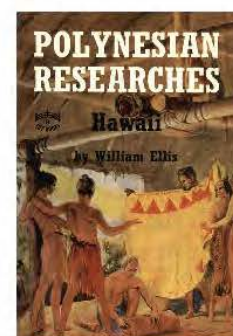
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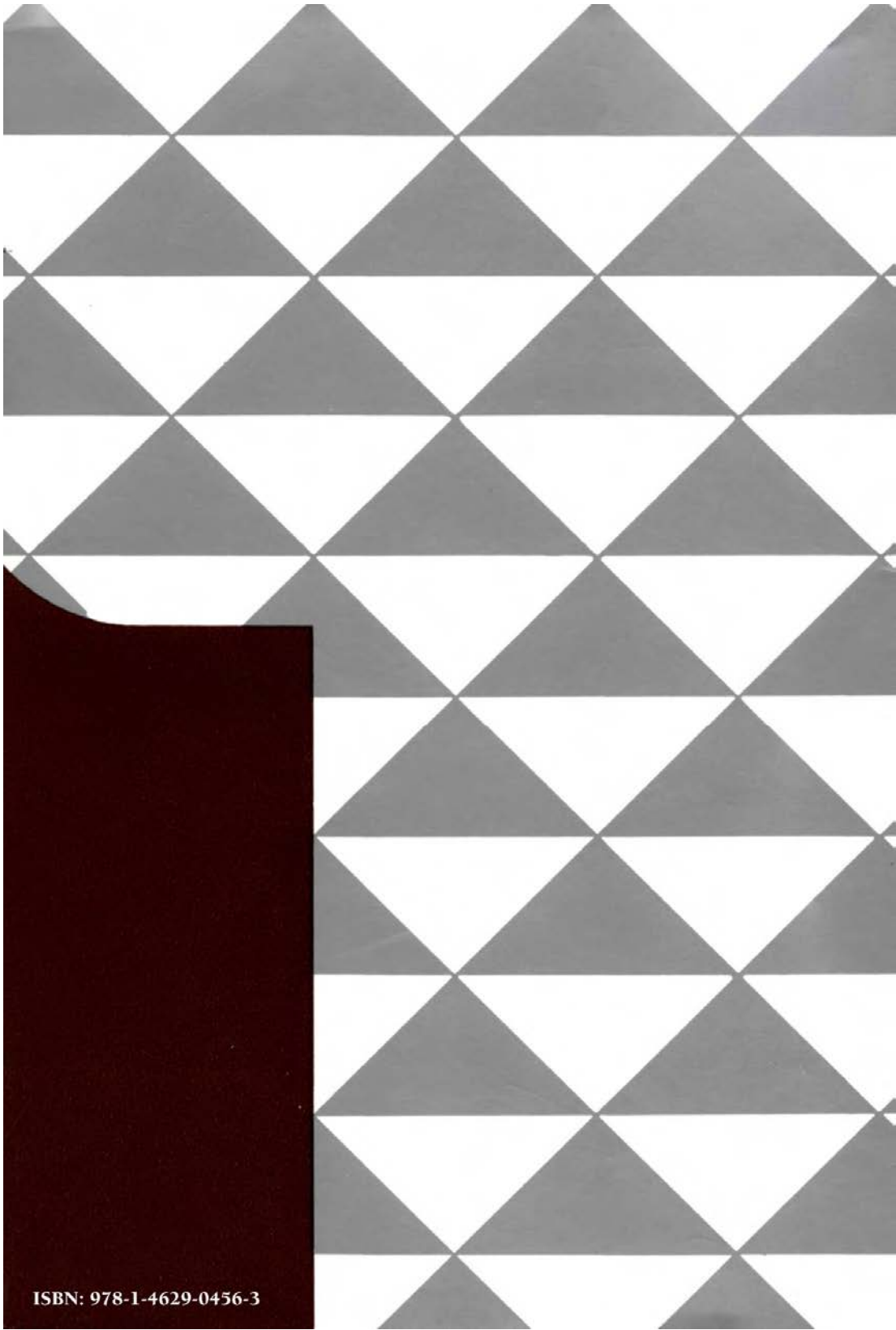
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