

Act Four

SCENE I

MICHIYUKI: THE JOURNEY
WITH THE DRUM



道
行
花
の
山



山

(This is a dance scene, with at least three narrators and as many as five samisen accompanists. Throughout the scene, one narrator delivers Shizuka's lines, another delivers Tadanobu's. At other times all three narrators sing narrative lines as a chorus. As the narration begins, the set is concealed by a curtain with broad vertical stripes of red and white. At the point indicated in the text this curtain is dropped and pulled offstage, revealing a vista of the deep green Toshino mountains, interlaced with clouds of blossoming pink cherries. At both SR and SL clusters of cherry trees stand in bloom, those at SR on a low hill. Across the top of the proscenium hang strands of festive cherry blossoms. At center stage in the near foreground is a single tall cherry tree, the stump of another tree downstage of it. Just behind the tree is a stage flat, a low hill painted in

*horizontal bands of white shading to sky blue, representing the mists that weave through the mountains).*¹

NARRATOR: Love and loyalty:

Which is the heavier burden?
Considered, weighed upon a scale,
One cannot say.

To Tadanobu, a warrior
Steadfast and true of heart,
His master Yoshitsune

Has entrusted one he loves,
The gentle Lady Shizuka.

Behind them forlornly lies
The Capital through which they've moved
In silence and in stealth.

Now they start their journey,
Happy to be dressed
In plain and simple garb.

The gossip brings them news
That Yoshitsune, tossed by waves,
And drifting without course,
Has arrived at Naniwazu.²

And made his destination Yoshino.
They take this clue

As counsel for their route
And make for the Yamato Road
To follow after.

(The red and white striped curtain falls, revealing the set. Shizuka stands at center. She wears a bright red gown decorated with embroidered pink cherry blossoms and flowing lines of mist in silver. She carries a thin cane and a black lacquered wicker hat with crimson cords. Slung across her back is a small bundle (the drum) wrapped in a lavender cloth. She and Tadanobu are traveling together, but she is alone on stage. In the long passage that follows, Shizuka dances.)

1. Since this scene is frequently staged as an independent unit, there are variations to the set.

2. Part of the modern city of Osaka.

The country lanes are unfamiliar,
Thickly grown with weeds
And difficult to follow.

Shizuka makes her way
Amid young grasses
Growing left and right,

While pheasants foraging for food
Cry *hororo-ken, hororo-ku*.³

"You birds long for your young,"
Thinks Shizuka, "And we who stray
Upon the road of love,

Ah, discontent are we
With what the world has dealt us.
How we envy you."

On wings spread wide
Like well starched *bakama*,⁴

The first geese of the autumn fly above.

A mated pair, how joyous they seem;
A better fate for them
Than that of humans.

The brushwood points the way
To the Uga no Mitama Shrine,⁵

Glimpsed sacred, shining through the mists.
At Muka Moor,
Where the river Izumi

3. Japanese onomatopoeia for the cry of a pheasant.

4. Skirtlike trousers, part of formal dress of the Tokugawa period.

5. Commonly known as Inari, Uga no Mitama is the Shinto female deity of cereals, especially rice. Her messenger is the fox, a creature endowed in folklore with magical powers, particularly the power of transforming itself into other forms, including human. The ubiquitous Inari shrines are readily identified by their bright red *torii* gateways, often in great numbers at a single shrine, and the stone foxes that usually stand as guardians at the gates.

Rises and flows forth,⁶
 Shizuka holds close the keepsake drum
 With its leather drumheads,
 And in her mind repeats the reverie:
 "How cherished is my lord,
 And dear, so dear, this keepsake drum."⁷
 Her thoughts are like the sweet exchange
 Of lovers in their chamber.
 "Oh to be embraced by him,
 Just as this drum is swathed in silk"—
 With such thoughts to give her hope,
 She leans upon her staff;
 But forlorn her lonely heart
 As she moves along the narrow road.
 As far as she can see,
 The boughs of trees are starting into bloom.
 In the village of Urahime⁸
 The village men all sing aloud
 The Plum Branch Song:⁹

My wife's in bliss,
 She's making eyes at me,
 Putting out our pillows
 In the daytime—

6. An allusion to a poem by Fujiwara no Kanesuke in the collection *Shin kokin waka shū* (comp. 1205):

When, I wonder, did I meet her
 That for her I should yearn so?
 Here along the river Izumi
 That rises and flows forth
 In Mika Moor?

See Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, Yamazaki Toshio, and Gotō Shigeo, eds., *Shin kokin waka shū*, 218.

7. A play on the words *kana* (leather/skin), referring to the leathers on the drum, and *kamaiti* (beloved/cherished).

8. Now part of the city of Nara.

9. The song is probably of folk origin.

Scene 1: *Michiyuki: The Journey with the Drum*

What a silly woman!
 A silly woman she!

To such a funny tune the young men sing,
 So like a flock of crows
 That even rustics raised from birth
 In cottages with roofs of straw
 Are set to rounds of laughter.
 In spring the kicking ball's kicked up
 To counts of "one" and "two."
 And if one listens carefully,
 One hears the eastern wind of spring join in,
 Melting last year's ice,
 Like the happy *manzai* songs
 That wish one endless youth.
 Just so prays Shizuka:
 For her lord a bounteous life.
 What winsome charm she has,
 Such promise for the future.
 "If indeed my lord's in Yamato,
 I'll hurry to his hiding place.
 With this Hatsune Drum," she thinks,
 "I wish my lord a long and fulsome life.
 Ah, would that to the present
 I could bring the past of long ago,
 Like the first sweet song
 Of the valley nightingale."

(From the off-stage musicians, concealed from the audience in an enclosure at SR, there are sounds suggesting the call of the nightingale.)

"And to entice the bird to follow me
 I'll play this Hatsune Drum,
 This Drum of Hatsune."

(She strikes the drum. There is an ominous roll of drums, and a white fox emerges at SR. It romps along the front edge of the stage, comes close to Shizuka, who is oblivious to its presence. The fox, apparently

drum to the drum, then goes to the low hill at SR and moves behind it. In a matter of seconds, the binged upper half of the stage flat on which the hill is painted drops forward, revealing Tadanobu dressed in a black robe edged in red. On his back is a cloth-wrapped bundle containing the suit of armor given him earlier by Yoshitsune.)

Now tardy Tadanobu comes,
Dressed in traveling garb,
Bearing tightly tied upon his back
A bundle bound in cloth.
Cheerfully he comes along,
Through roads across the meadows,
Along the paths between the paddy fields,
All composure in his simple dress.
To keep from standing out,
He's put some distance
Between himself and Shizuka,
But he's misguessed the speed
With which the lady walked.

TADANOBU: You must have been anxious about me. Luckily, there's no one here to see us.

NARRATOR: Tadanobu takes out the armor
Received from his master—
Along with the bestowal of his name—
And humbly now he bows before it,
As though it were his lord himself.

(Tadanobu sets the armor up on the tree stump in front of the center cherry tree.)

To represent his august face,

Atop the armor Shizuka sets the drum.

(Shizuka places the drum on top of the armor, both she and Tadanobu bow before it. During the following narration, the two dance, Shizuka adroitly using her fan to mime actions to the words. At one point, with her back to Tadanobu, she throws and he catches the fan—a virtuoso display of puppet manipulation.)

My sleeve is like the stones offshore,
That even in the ebbing tide



During the michiyuki journey through the Yoshino mountains, a magical fox appears in response to Shizuka's beating of the drum. (Act 4, scene 1)

Remain to all unseen:
Though my love is unaware,
My sleeve is never dry.¹⁰

In secret to the west country
Has Yoshitsune gone,
Across the waters
Churned by wave and wind,
Until his boat was blown ashore
Into Sumiyoshi Bay.¹¹

From there, according to the news,
He has traveled on to Yoshino.
“Let us go there now,” they say,
And each retrieves the keepsake

10. A poem from the collection known as *Hyakunin isshu*, thought to have been compiled in the thirteenth century by the noted poet Fujiwara no Teika. The play text quotes only a portion of the poem, but I have rendered it in full.

11. Sumiyoshi is in the southern part of the modern city of Osaka.



Tadanobu (on the left) and Shizuka dance during their journey through the Yoshino mountains in the *Michiyuki*. (Act 4, scene 1)

Given by their lord.¹²
 Geese and swallows: which of these
 Possess the greatest charm?
 More dear, we feel, are swallows,
 Who spend the spring with us
 And raise their little ones.
 Yet even if it be the geese,
 Who turn their backs
 Upon the blossoms of the spring,
 Still do they bring us tidings,¹³
 And thus we have a bond with them.

12. The following twelve lines are not in Tsurumi, *Takeda Izumo shū*, the most complete text of the play. They have been drawn from the text in Yūda, *Bunroku jōruri shū*, 211.

13. An allusion to a story in the Chinese official history of the former Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 8), the *Han Shu* by Pan Ku. The story is of Su Wu (died 60 B.C.), the Han emperor's envoy to the barbarian Hsiung-nu on China's northwestern frontier. The Hsiung-nu detained Su Wu and tried several times

"Oh yes, oh yes, such fun it is
 As voices sing the rhythm out."¹⁴

"Surely," Tadanobu thinks,
 "This gift of armor from my lord
 Betokens the loyal service
 Rendered by my brother Tsuginobu."¹⁵

(The following approximately twenty lines are delivered in the chanting style of the *Nō* theater.)

His mind can see it now,
 That scene at Dannoura.¹⁶

(As Tadanobu recalls and recounts the story of the battle, he pulls down the top of his black robe, revealing beneath it a red under-robe dyed with the white Genji-guruma pattern—a large carriage wheel, the axle centering on his neck. Throughout the following narration he mimes the story in dance.)

In the water the soldiers' ships
 Flying the Heike flags of red!
 On the land the Genji troops
 With their banners of white!
 "See what a pompous sight!"

without success to win him to their side, eventually sending him north to tend sheep. Years later, the Chinese emperor asked for Su Wu's return, but his captors claimed that he was dead. The emperor, however, had shot a goose to whose leg was tied a message from Su Wu. After nineteen years in captivity, Su Wu was restored to his homeland. See Burton Watson, tr., *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China: Selections from the History of the Former Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, 34–45; also Giles, *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary*, 684–85. The story is also recounted, with slight variations, in *The Tale of the Heike*, 94–95.

14. Apparently a fragment of a folk song.

15. The long passage from this point and ending with the line "In the lines of battle" is not found in Tsurumi, *Takeda Izumo shū*; it has been incorporated from the text in Yūda, *Bunroku jōruri shū*, 211–12.

16. The following lines derive largely from the *Nō* play *Kagetokiyo*. See the translation by Arthur Waley in *The Nō Plays of Japan*, 132–33. Dannoura was the scene of the final and decisive battle between the Heike and the Genji. The battle that Tadanobu describes, however, is the one at Yashima, which took place about a month prior to the clash at Dannoura.

Cries a Heike warrior,
 And up he hoists his lance,
 Flashing in the setting sun.
 To the other side he shouts,
 And loudly he proclaims his name:
 "I am a samurai of the Heike,
 By name, Akushichiyōe Kagekiyo!"
 As fiercely he strides forth, strides forth,
 The lesser soldiers on the Genji side
 Move back, like blossoms
 Scattered pell-mell in a gale.
 "Have all of you lost your pride?"
 Shouts out a Genji general.
 "Here I am, Miyonoya no Shiro!"
 He says, and to the water's edge
 He springs out smartly to attack.
 Sideways with their swords they slash,
 And dance their lances about.
 But evenly the sides are matched,
 As amid the sounds of waves
 They trade blows with each other.
 Then Miyonoya's long sword
 Snaps off at its hilt,
 And back he retreats
 Like a receding tide.
 "Ah," shouts Kagekiyo,
 "Will you, like the geese that wing away,
 Turn your back upon
 The flowers of the fray?"
 Beneath his arm
 He tucks his lance and short sword,
 And seizes tight the neck strap
 Of Miyonoya's helmet.
 Back pulls Kagekiyo,
 Reeling, staggering.

The other way heaves Miyonoya,
 Tottering, faltering.
 Then with a snap the strap
 Of Miyonoya's helmet gives way,
 And both men fall back
 And down upon their buttocks.
 "How strong," shouts one,
 "The arm of Kagekiyo!"
 "Oh no," comes the reply, "how stout
 The shaft of Miyonoya's neck!"
 "Ha ha ha ha ha," laughs Miyonoya.
 "Ho ho ho ho ho," bellows Kagekiyo in return.
 But after this exchange of mirth,
 Many were their fierce encounters
 In the lines of battle.
 "In the fight at Yashima," thinks Tadanobu,
 "My brother Tsuginobu stood
 And blocked the way of my master's horse
 As he started for the thick of battle.
 Oh, then I heard there was
 Among the Heike troops
 A mighty archer, great of fame—
 Noritsune, Lord of Noto.
 Hardly had he shouted out his name
 Than with a whir he loosed a shaft.
 The arrow's point—oh, bitter the memory:
 The instant that it drove
 Into my brother's breast,
 Head above his heels he pitched.
 A warrior who dies a tragic death
 Leaves behind a name
 As a faithful subject,
 A retainer ever true.
 I but think upon it, and my sleeve
 Is never dry of tears,

As ever moist the well pipes of Tsutsui.¹⁷
 "Someday," thinks Shizuka,
 "My lord will know distress no more;
 His life will be as long
 As the threadlike willow limbs
 At Yagyū¹⁸ in the springtime,
 And we will be forever joined
 As trees of different trunks
 May share a common bough.
 How ever can such bonds decay away?"
 Though they try to hurry on,
 Lending each the other's strength,
 Their progress seems so slow,
 As they cross the Ashihara Pass,
 Move through the villages of Gō,
 Put behind them Tsuchida and Mutsuda,¹⁹
 Soon, blown along the meadow lanes
 By the zephyrs of spring,
 Misdudging vistas filled with cherry blooms
 For congeries of clouds,
 They reach the village at the base
 Of beautiful Mount Yoshino.

17. This is a pun on *tsumi*, a circular well, and the place Tsutsui, now the city Koryama, just southwest of the city of Nara.

18. A town just east of Tsutsui.

19. All the places mentioned are in modern Nara prefecture, in the vicinity of the Yoshino Mountains.

SCENE 2
 THE ZAŌ HALL



(Large rocky outcrops slant down toward the stage from SR and SL. Tall cherry trees in bloom stand at SL and upstage center. Beyond, somewhat to SR and situated on a rocky rise, is a building with a thatch roof, stone steps leading up to its main room. This is the Zaō Hall. The area in front of the building constitutes its courtyard where local farmers are busy sweeping.)¹

NARRATOR: The cherries of Mount Yoshino
 Would soften even the scowl
 Of the angry visaged Buddha Zaō,
 A full sixteen *shaku* tall.²

1. This scene is now rarely, if ever, performed. The only source I have been able to find of what may perhaps be the set is in *Gidayū nenpyō: Meiiji-hen*, 461 (second drawing from the top, center column). The scene is not included in any of the texts that provide staging information, so it is impossible to know details of stage action.

2. Approximately 4.85 meters, or nearly 16 feet.

The caves of the houses are buried in the mist,
And surpassing all in loveliness,
Is the Zaô Hall.³

Not yet are the cherries in bloom,
And every branch and twig looks bare
Beneath the sky of early spring.⁴

Knowing that the priests
Of all the temples on Mount Yoshino
Are soon to start their new year council,
The farmers under the temple's sway
Dance attendance on their betters
And sweep the precincts clean.

More fearful are they
Of the chastening priests
Than the Buddha they should respect.
Shizuka, "Quiet Gentle One," she's called,
But the name belies the haste

With which she comes along the road,
Tadanobu watching over her with care,
As they seek to follow Yoshitsune.

At length his trail has led them here,
And though the time is mid-Third Month,
How beautiful this view of Yoshino
As far as eyes can see.

Among themselves the farmers talk.

FARMER #1: My, what a beautiful lady from the Capital. But it's still a bit early to be here for flower-viewing.

FARMER #2: What do you mean, flower-viewing? A man and a woman traveling together: why, she's probably gotten pregnant and there was nothing to do but elope. You reckon that's the case?

3. On Zaô Hall, see act 3, scene 1, "The Pasania Tree," note 2.

4. There may be an inconsistency here, the previous scene having been one in which the cherry trees were in full bloom. However, a visitor to Mount Yoshino suggests that altitude affects the timing of the blossoms: those lower down were in full bloom, while those higher up were still only in bud. Zaô Hall may be some distance up the mountain.

SHIZUKA: Oh no, that's not it at all. We've come on business with His Reverence Kawatsura.⁵ Which way should we go from here?

NARRATOR: Without hearing more,
The farmers quickly understand.

FARMER #1: Eh, I see, I see. You've come to go into service as a concubine. Well, in that case you're in luck. His Reverence Kawatsura is the head of all the priests on this mountain. He does whatever he wants anywhere in Yoshino. What's more, he has a wife and eats all the fish and fowl he likes.⁶ He may seem a degenerate priest, but he's allowed to be married and he holds a high rank; so, please ma'am, you just accommodate him—and good luck to you.

SHIZUKA (*aside*): I can see you're a person of fine judgment. And is there perhaps an important guest staying with His Reverence?

FARMER #1: Oh, I wouldn't know about such things. But it's surely lively there. I hear the koto and samisen playing every day. You go up this road here. In this direction is the Shrine of the Nursemaid God.⁷ Women aren't allowed to go there. This side of it there's a path, and you'll see His Reverence's house on the left. It's the place with the big gate.

SHIZUKA: Yes, yes, thank you very much.

NARRATOR: Impatiently, they make their way
Quickly up the path together.

5. Kawatsura is referred to throughout the play by the title of Hôgen, the middle of three rankings of priests, the rank of Hôkyô being the lowest. It is interesting that the playwrights have made him a friend and supporter of Yoshitsune in the play. In the *Gikeiki*, he is the leader of a rabble of warrior priests attacking Yoshitsune and his party. See McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, 180ff.

6. Marriage and eating living things were normally forbidden to members of the Buddhist clergy. Perhaps by virtue of his rank such a diet is permitted Kawatsura.

7. The formal name of the shrine is the Mikumari Shrine, which the local dialect changes to Mikomori (Honored Nursemaid).

SCENE 3
THE CONFERENCE AT
THE ZAÔ HALL¹

(A building stretches about half the way across the stage from SL, its principal room open to the audience, its entryway to SR. The SR portion of the set shows a somewhat more distant view of two mountains sloping down to a valley between them. The mountain at far SL is Mount Se; the other mountain is Mount Ino. Each mountain is green with pine trees and other vegetation. On each mountain, and downstage of it, stands a more prominent pine tree. The forestage is the courtyard.)

NARRATOR: At the early meeting bell,
In comes Yamashina Hokkyôbô,²

¹ I have been unable to discover a description of the set for this scene; I have presumed something along the lines given here.

² A henchman of Yokawa no Kakuhan, one of Yoshitsune's enemies in Yoshino. In the *Gikeiki* he appears as Yamashina no Hôgen. See McCullough, *Tachibana*, 187ff.

Scene 3: The Conference at the Zaô Hall

213

So ruthless and bold a prelate
That he has a shorter name:
Wild Hokkyô he is called.
Coming hard upon his heels,
A priest who bears the name of Demon,
A rascal not at all unlike his name:
Umemoto, the Demon Sadobô.
And with them comes the doctor priest,
Kaerizaka no Yakubô.³

Though all are proper priests,
Great swords are strapped to their waists,
They wear the wide-hemmed *hakama*,⁴
And each is eager to be first
To show his witless face
At the council for today.

The rustic farmers all turn tail
And crawl abjectly off.

Demon Sadobô glares about him.

SADOBÔ: Still haven't finished sweeping? I gave you an order some time ago. Lazy sluggards, the lot of you! Wait till it's time for the land tax!

NARRATOR: How he scolds them.

"Yessir, yessir, yessir," say the farmers.
Catching the hint, each and every one
Turns with a will to the sweeping.
They sweep upwind, so dust and dirt
Cover the cassocks and stoles of the priests.

SADOBÔ: You abominations! What do you think you're doing?

NARRATOR: No holding him back
When it comes to abuse.

FARMER: We're sweeping, sir.

³ Another of Kakuhan's followers. His name, Yakubô, indicates that he is a doctor or pharmacist. In the *Gikeiki* he is called Yakui no Kami, Kaerizaka no Kohjiri. See McCullough, *Tachibana*, 30.

⁴ The formal skirtlike trouser, in this case with a wider than usual opening at the hem, presumably for greater freedom of movement in combat.

NARRATOR: Themselves bedecked in dust,

The farmers flee the scene pell-mell.

Now in walks Kawatsura Hôgen,

Director General of all temples

Standing on Mount Yoshino.

Not fond of bright display,

His robes are of a pale green hue,

With billowing trousers

Bound with cords at his feet.

KAWATSURA: Ah, all of you are early.

NARRATOR: After greetings all around,

His priests attend him

Seated on round cushions.

A pause, then Kawatsura Hôgen speaks.

KAWATSURA: I sent around a message that we have this early meeting. I am most happy to see you in attendance. The matter before us is as follows.

NARRATOR: He brings out a letter

From the folds of his robe.

KAWATSURA: This letter has come to me from my brother-in-law Ibara Saemon, a retainer to our lord in Kamakura. Please listen to what it says so that the matter will be clear to you.

NARRATOR: He spreads the letter before him.

KAWATSURA (*reading the letter*): "I write to you in great urgency. Regarding Kuro Hôgan Yoshitsune, his elder brother Yoritomo has been empowered by a decree of the Retired Emperor to hunt him down. Moreover, since learning of the killing of Tosabô Shôzon, of Yoshitsune's flight from the Capital, and of the latter's movement along the Yamato Road, Yoritomo, Lord of Kamakura, has been most grievously angered. You are to set forth at once and attack him, and you are to execute the issuance of warrants for him throughout the provinces. A reward will be given for his death. In the event that you give him shelter, all of the temples on Mount Yoshino will be destroyed. Given by my hand on this the thirtieth day of the First Month to Master Kawatsura Hô-

gen." It is signed and sealed, Ibara Saemon. You hear that, all of you? This is the matter we are to discuss. That Yoshitsune, who has been blameless from the start, is traveling along the Yamato Road surely means that he is coming to this temple to ask us for help. When he comes, shall we hide him as he will request, or is it your view that we should attack him? When each of you has considered this in his heart, you are to discuss the matter with me candidly.

NARRATOR: Hardly has he heard these words

Than Wild Hokkyô speaks up.

HOKKYÔ: What you have said is all quite well. However, there is no need to query us in council. You, as head of all of the temples on this mountain, should take care of the matter. If your reverence's intention in this issue is stated unequivocally, no one is going to oppose it; all will be of the same mind. First, then, tell us what you think we should do.

KAWATSURA: Ah, I have my own views. But if I tell you first what I think, then if that does not match your own views you will be unlikely to speak in opposition. Should that occur, it could lead us to make blunders. I will tell you later of my own opinion, but first each of you must say frankly what you think.

NARRATOR: Reserve yet hangs about them,

And for a spell they fail to answer.

Then Kacizaka Yakuibô abruptly speaks out.

YAKUIBÔ: First, then, this humble monk's opinion. We might hide Yoshitsune here two or three, up to twenty or thirty, years, and the food to sustain him alone might be small enough. But that hog Benkei—why, with him the food simply goes in one end and out the other! I just can't imagine what it would take to feed him! If we say that we won't hide Yoshitsune, why that outrageous rascal just might use one of his seven weapons, such as his saw, and cut his way into our storehouse. Rather than be robbed of so much, maybe we should feed him tea and rice gruel made up by calculating the share contributed by each temple.

NARRATOR: Though His Reverence finds this speech

Amusing and curious . . .

KAWATSURA: Hmm, what you say may be important. Now, you other two.

NARRATOR: At once, one of them speaks up.

HOKKYŌ: Come now, we don't need to calculate anything in this matter. It's the duty of men of the cloth such as us to give aid to people. If an army comes from Kamakura to attack us because we've given shelter to the blameless Yoshitsune, we should put aside our robes of tolerance and don the armor of a demon queller; we should mount a counter-attack and kill our attackers. We'll chase every one of them back to Kamakura, and we'll let Yoshitsune explain his innocence. Then we'll line up those who have falsely accused Yoshitsune and cut them down one by one. And if that isn't possible, we'll attack Yoritomo, a man who can't distinguish right from wrong. Then Lord Yoshitsune will take control of the country. That's my opinion on the matter. I should like to hear His Reverence's views.

KAWATSURA: No, I'll not speak yet. Thanks to the kindness of Brother Hokkyō, we have of late had a visiting priest with us: the Zen master Yokawa no Kakuhan.⁵ He has not yet joined us here, but I must hear his opinion also. It is late, and I've waited long for him to come.

NARRATOR: A moment later,

Slowly along the mountain path

Comes the priest whose name

Is known to all: Yokawa no Kakuhan.

The sleeves of his robe are tied with cord

And rolled back up his arm;

A great sword three and a half feet long

Hangs ready at his side.

5. In the *Gikeiti*, Yokawa no Kakuhan is a monk of extraordinary stature and strength who battles and is eventually killed by Yoshitsune's retainer Sarō Tadonobu. See McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, 183–86.

He takes his place at the lowest seat,
But such is his height and priestly stature,
He seems far more impressive.

(*Kakuhan enters from SR.*)

KAWATSURA: Ah, Master Kakuhan. We've been looking forward to your arrival. Please, come closer.

NARRATOR: As he beckons him to draw near,
His Reverence rises gently.

KAWATSURA: Look, Kakuhan, see over there the two mountains shrouded in the mist. Those are the Inose Mountains,⁶ a famous setting for poems about bringing people together. They are divided by the Yoshino River: to the west beyond the river is Mount Imo, and on this the eastern side is Mount Se. *Imo* means younger sister, or younger brother. Mount Se, the elder brother mountain, of course represents Yoritomo. Thus, the friendship of the older and younger brothers—Yoritomo and Yoshitsune—is breached by the Yoshino River. Though they are but mountains, such poems as this have been written about them:

Let us accept it.
Love's course can but remind us
Of the Yoshino,
The river falling between
Husband Mountain and Wife Hill.⁷

6. Located in modern Nara prefecture, the two mountains stand on either side of the Yoshino river and have long been sung in poetry as mountains representing girl (Mount Imo) and boy (Mount Se) lovers. Kawatsura has them symbolize Yoritomo (Mount Se) and his younger brother Yoshitsune (Mount Imo).

7. An anonymous poem (no. 828) in the *Kokin waka shū*. See Saeeda Umetomo, ed., *Kokin waka shū*, 264. The translation here is by McCullough. *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry*, 180. Mounts Imo and Se were often likened to lovers or to husband and wife, as well as to the sibling relationship that Kawatsura uses. As McCullough explains in her note to the poem, it means that one should be resigned to the impermanence of any relationship between a man and a woman.

Even such as we of the cloth who have cast aside all things mundane, are we not to respond to a call for aid? Or do we cut down the supplicant with a well tempered blade? I would hear your brief response. Please speak.

NARRATOR: Kakuhan needs no time for reflection.

He quickly stands and gives a nod,

Then takes a bow and arrow

Offered as a votive gift at Zaō Hall.

He strings the bow.

KAKUHAN: See, Master Kawatsura, my concise response. The two trees you see before you standing on each mountain. They are the objects of my aim. Observe.

NARRATOR: He mates the arrow to the bowstring;

Unhesitatingly, with a whir he lets it fly.

Now there the white fletched arrow stands,

Thrust deep in the tree upon Mount Se.

His Reverence observes it sharply.

KAWATSURA: You've drawn your bow against Mount Se that has been likened to Yoritomo. This must mean that you oppose Yoritomo and are Yoshitsune's ally. Hmmmm, I see.

NARRATOR: He rolls up the letter he had read

And puts it into the breast fold of his robe.

KAWATSURA: Yamashina Hokkyō, Yakubō, this is the same position you take, is that not so?

NARRATOR: Both chime in together.

BOTH: We stand with Yoshitsune!

KAWATSURA: Hmmmm. In that case, I will now make clear where I stand.

NARRATOR: The selfsame bow and arrow

He takes into his hand

And stretches taut the bow.

What will be his target,

To which tree will the arrow fly?

As all look on, he sends it winging

To Mount Imo, the younger brother peak

That stands for Yoshitsune.

THREE PRIESTS: Yaa, then Your Reverence stands with Yoritomo! You draw your bow against Yoshitsune!

KAWATSURA: Just so. Rather than join forces with a fugitive, I follow the tenor of the times. It is my responsibility to see that every temple on this mountain is not destroyed.

KAKUHAN: Are you quite sure of your position?

KAWATSURA: Why do you ask, Kakuhan? If Yoshitsune seeks aid here, go ahead and give him refuge. I will certainly seek him out, and you will see that I shall kill him. When that time comes, we will be on opposite sides. I've wasted my time consulting with these ignorant priests. This concludes today's council. I bid you all good day.

NARRATOR: But strange his attitude,

As with these parting words,

And not waiting for his palanquin,

He sets out for his quarters.

Behind him Wild Sadobō

Stands with mouth agape.

SADOBŌ: Hey, just what is this? What does he mean? We were of one accord, we must have misunderstood him. Kakuhan, what do you think?

NARRATOR: Yamashina and the rest

All turn to Kakuhan,

Who bursts out into laughter.

KAKUHAN: All of you have so little understanding, you don't know what His Reverence really thinks. If you considered his words carefully, you'd know that deep within his heart he is already giving refuge to Yoshitsune. He was able to perceive that my support for Yoshitsune was false. If we wait too long, His Reverence may try to help Yoshitsune escape. We shall fix our plan for tonight at the stroke of eight.⁸ We'll attack Yoshitsune in the dark and kill him; and, incidentally, we shall be the recipients of a reward from the Lord of Kamakura, Yoritomo. Now, come and hear Kakuhan's strategy for this night attack.

8. 2 A.M. by Western reckoning.

NARRATOR: On a rotting root beneath a giant tree

He sits down heavily.

KAKUHAN: At various times during my religious disciplines I have committed to memory Sun Tzu's book of strategy.⁹ Do not err from what I now tell you. Hokkyō, you will take ten men in full armor from the Stone Lantern Crossroad¹⁰ to Ichimonji and creep up to His Reverence's residence, where you are to ring a small bell boisterously three or four times. Sadohō will go directly behind the Nyoirinjī Temple, remove the bridge at Rokujizō, wait until the enemy attempts to flee, and then stop them with a fusillade of arrows. I, Kakuhan, will set fire to the priests' quarters in Shimbō Valley, sending them up in flames, and chase Kawatsura's priests down Shōden Hill. A victory tonight is almost in our hands. Take heed, take heed!

NARRATOR: Yakubō shakes his head.

YAKUBO: That's what we think too. But what if our opponents are strong, and what if they drive back Hokkyō's force? Suppose they surge out in a full speed attack of their own, make Katte Shrine their base, and then start to beat frantically on the gate, what then?

KAKUHAN: Aha, you challenge my plan with good reason. In that case, we'll climb to the top of Scarf Waving Peak at the Kongō Zaō Hall of the Hachioji Temple and shoot straight down upon them. If we shoot our arrows at them for a while, they won't be able to withstand the attack and will retreat.

HOKKYŌ: Oh, the cherries still won't be in bloom, but they'll move behind the trunks and under the branches of the trees.

9. Sun Tzu (also known as Sun Wu) was a sixth-century B.C. Chinese who wrote a famous treatise on the strategy of warfare.

10. This and the several other places mentioned below are identifiable locations on Mount Yoshino. This plethora of detail about the establishments and geography of Mount Yoshino seems intended to show off the playwrights' knowledge of the Yoshino locale and to appeal to the sense of local geography of contemporary audiences, most of whom would have come from the general area of Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara.

They'll escape along the narrow road that winds among the trees to Tennōbashi Bridge and the Stupa of the Great General. And they might go to the corner tower of the castle and wait there so they can chase us and fire on us from hiding. How do we handle that?

KAKUHAN: You're a shrewd one, Hokkyō. But no matter how much the fugitives shoot at us, they won't have many arrows. We'll withdraw and then attack, attack and withdraw again. We'll make them use up all their arrows, and it won't take any time at all to kill them off. Don't be afraid. Just be silent and prepare yourselves! Let's go, all of you. During one of Emperor Tenmu's battles, a heavenly maiden came to earth and performed a dance for him. That was the beginning of our protective magical rites.¹¹ Now, on to victory!

NARRATOR: He stamps upon the ground, Seven steps to the left,

Seven steps to the right.

To left and right, fourteen paces all,
And he brings his dance to a close.

KAKUHAN: Now go! Advance!

NARRATOR: Rare it is to see such grit

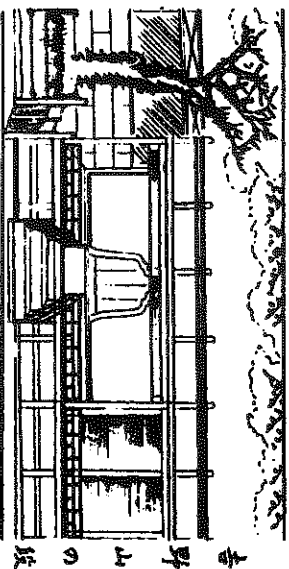
As that of Zen priest Kakuhan,

And at a spirited pace

He hurries full tilt away.

11. Tenmu (reigned 673-86) was Japan's fortieth emperor. He was named heir to his brother Tenchi, but to escape his enemies he shaved his head and retired to Mount Yoshino. Later, in a battle with Tenchi's son (who had succeeded his father on the throne), it is said that a heavenly maiden appeared to Tenmu on Scarf Waving Peak and performed a dance, after which Tenmu's army went on to victory. The magical rites refer to ancient practices, involving a kind of dance, performed to ward off calamity when one left home. See Tsurumi, *Takeda Tenmu shi*, 260, n. 57.

SCENE 4
THE MANSION OF
KAWATSURA HÔGEN



(The stage is dominated by the interior of a palatial building running from SL approximately three-quarters of the way toward SR. At SL is a smaller room enclosed by shoji panels. The main room, open toward the audience, is devoid of furnishings and has at its rear three wide bamboo blinds, edged in crimson and with crimson ribboning down the center. In front of the rooms is a low balustrade, lacquered in black and with gold fittings. At both the center of the open room and at its SR end are short stairways, each with a continuation of the balustrade down the steps. The room is raised off the ground by wooden supports in tan. Across the top of both rooms is a series of panels bordered in black lacquered wood, each panel decorated with three rosettes of cherry leaves and blossoms. Downstage of the room is the courtyard. At SR, outside the room is a tall bamboo fence woven in a herringbone pattern enclosing the compound. Across the top of the

fence may be seen flowering cherry trees. The top of the proscenium is decorated with hangings of pink cherry blossoms. As the narration begins, there is no one on stage. At the point noted below, the bamboo blinds roll up to reveal a wide arched doorway hung with an embroidered curtain made up of vertical bands of cloth varying in colors and patterns. The walls on either side of the doorway continue the rosette patterns of cherry leaves and blossoms.)

NARRATOR:

If there be no song
Of the nightingale
In mountain hamlets,
Where snow has yet to melt away,
How to know that spring has come;¹

Spring indeed has come,
But for Kurô Hôgan Yoshitsune
No spring of reconciliation does it bring,
As in an inner chamber
Of Kawatsura's residence
He is consoled by melodies
Of koto and samisen.²
Even these are tuned
To quiet modes and softened
With muffled bridges for the strings—
The better from the world to lie concealed.
Like an echelon of geese rise
The bridges of the instrument;³
But unlike these birds

1. A poem by the Middle Councilor Tomorada in the collection *Shini waka shû* (comp. ca. 996).

2. While the koto, a long 13-stringed zitherlike instrument, is of ancient origin, the samisen is one of those expected anachronisms of eighteenth-century history-based puppet dramas: the play is set in the late twelfth century, but the samisen came to Japan in the late sixteenth century.

3. The tall bridges that hold up the strings on the koto may resemble in their arrangement on the instrument an echelon of geese.

That turn their back on spring,⁴
The kindness of His Reverence,
Determined to stand by his friend,
Is surely a happy augury.

(At this point, the bamboo blinds at the back of the main room roll up, revealing the arched and curtained doorway. Kawatsura Hogen enters slowly and pensively from SR.)

Now returns, slowly and deliberately,

His Reverence Kawatsura,

Absent since this morning,

His countenance betraying

Some design that lies within his heart.

Asuka, his wife, comes out to meet him.

(Asuka enters through the arched doorway.)

ASUKA: Oh, you've returned earlier than I expected. The council today, was it about your management of all the temples on the mountain, or did it concern our guest inside, Yoshitsune?

KAWATSURA: Oh, it was about Yoshitsune, all right.

ASUKA: Hm, and did there appear to be full agreement that everyone here also supported Yoshitsune?

KAWATSURA: Of course, the lower priests Kaerizaka no Yakuibō, Yamashina the Wild Hōkyō, and Umemoto the Demon Sadobō all did. And Yokawa no Kakutan in particular declared himself a partisan of Yoshitsune. But since I knew they were trying to find out my own personal feelings, I declared that I stood with Kamakura, and then I left.

ASUKA: I see. And in saying that you stood with Kamakura, you were also trying to fathom what your priests were really thinking, is that right?

KAWATSURA: Oh no, I've had a change of heart today. Yoshitsune and I are now on opposite sides.

ASUKA: What? You're going to turn Yoshitsune over to . . .

KAWATSURA: I intend to turn Yoshitsune over to Yoritomo. If you don't understand, just look at this.

4. An echo of lines in the opening scene of this act, "The Journey With the Drum."

NARRATOR: From the breast fold of his robe

He flings the letter down.

His wife takes it up

And reads it to the end.

ASUKA: According to this letter, the people in Kamakura know that Lord Yoshitsune is hiding on this mountain.

KAWATSURA: You're quite right, it does. Heaven has no mouth, but speaks through the hearts of men, says the proverb. Unless there is somebody who revealed his presence here to Kamakura, why would my brother-in-law Ibara Saemon send such a letter? Now that Yoshitsune has been betrayed and they know that he's here, he cannot escape. Therefore, rather than let someone else get the credit for the deed, I have decided that he will die by my hand.

ASUKA: What! Are you serious?

KAWATSURA: I am.

ASUKA: You really mean that you intend to kill Lord Yoshitsune?

KAWATSURA: Stop nagging me!

NARRATOR: Carefully in her heart

She weighs the matter.

Then swiftly she draws her husband's sword.

Seeing that his wife would kill herself,

He snatches away the blade.

KAWATSURA: What are you doing? Why kill yourself?

NARRATOR: He watches her face intently.

ASUKA: You're being unreasonable, my lord. Why have you kept me out of this? However many letters offering a reward might come, a thousand, ten thousand, it's not like you to change your mind once you have made a promise. Because this letter came to you, you suspect me, the younger sister of Yoritomo's loyal retainer Ibara Saemon. You thought that I had informed my brother about Lord Yoshitsune's hiding place. I'll not waste time protesting my innocence. If you suspect me, kill me, my lord, at once.

NARRATOR: The bitter tears she sheds
Show the truth of what she speaks.

His Reverence hears her out;
Then he takes the letter
And, unhesitating, tears it into shreds.

KAWATSURA: Don't throw your life away for a falsehood. In doubting my own wife I must appear to you irresolute, but I am completely loyal to Lord Yoshitsune. This letter is not genuine; I was using it to probe the hearts of my priests. Now, I have torn it up, and you may rest easy. Give up any thoughts of your own destruction, my wife.

NARRATOR: As he explains himself,

Her bitterness disappears

Like the snow in spring.

Lord Yoshitsune emerges

From the inner room.

(*Yoshitsune enters from the shōji paneled room at SL.*)

YOSHITSUNE: Ah, Your Reverence, you've returned. I would like to speak with you. (*Asuka bows and withdraws through the arched doorway.*) You have never forgotten our friendship on Mount Kurama.⁵ It is impossible to express in words how grateful I am for all your kindnesses. As we discussed the matter earlier, I am aware of the details of your council today with the other priests.

NARRATOR: At his words, Kawatsura

Bows his head in thanks.

KAWATSURA: I have instructions from our mentor Tōkōbō⁶ on Mount Kurama that you are a most special person. You know my determination to support you fully. Since you've sent Musashibō off to your ally Hidehira⁷ in the far north,

5. In the play, Kawatsura has the role of Yoshitsune's ally. In the *Gikeiki*, however, he is a bumptious and hostile monk who leads a rabble of monks against Yoshitsune. See McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, 180-89.

6. Tōkōbō was the priest who was Yoshitsune's scholarly mentor on Mount Kurama to the north of Kyoto when Yoshitsune was a youth. See McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, 71-76.

7. Fujiwara no Hidehira (died 1187), the lord of the northeastern province of Rikuuoku (now Iwate and Aomori prefectures, the northernmost on the main island of Honshu) protected Yoshitsune as a youth and gave him shelter later when he was escaping from Yoritomo's agents. Yoshitsune eventually died in Hidehira's domain.

and your retainers are few in number, count me as one of them, like Kamei and Suroga.

NARRATOR: As he speaks, a servant comes in. (*From SR.*)

SERVANT: Satō Shirōbei Tadanobu is here seeking his master Yoshitsune's whereabouts. Shall I show him in?

YOSHITSUNE: Ah, I see that he is safe. Send him in; I will see him.

NARRATOR: As his command is passed on,

Kawatsura and his wife

Withdraw to the neighbor room.

(*Kawatsura and Asuka leave through the arched doorway.*)

Led in by a servant,

Shirōbei Tadanobu enters.

(*Tadanobu enters from SR. He carries his sword in his left hand, and he wears formal long trousers that trail along the floor behind him.*)

He comes into the room

Where Yoshitsune waits,

And for a while he pauses,

Gazing on his master's visage.

Then without a word he bows,

Tears of anguish streaming down his face.

His general is most pleased to see him.

YOSHITSUNE: Since parting with you, the Lord of Kamakura has pursued me relentlessly from one place to another. When I had nowhere else to go, I was given shelter by His Reverence Kawatsura, a disciple of Tōkōbō. I face a cold and compassionless spring, but for a while I have kept body and soul together. That you are still well since I bestowed my own name upon you shows that my luck has not yet run out. Ah, that augurs well for the future. I am most pleased. And how is Shizuka since I placed her in your care?

NARRATOR: At his lord's inquiry,

Tadanobu listens, seeming puzzled.

TADANOBU: Your question surprises me, my lord. After the Heike clan was defeated at the battle of Yashima, and my lord proclaimed himself victorious in unifying the country, I received news that my mother was ill. When you heard of

this you graciously granted me leave, and I returned to my home in the north in the Third Month of last year.⁸ Shortly thereafter, my mother passed away. In the midst of the forty-nine-day mourning period that followed, my battle wound began to throb with pain, developing into the illness known as tetanus. I had given up any hope of recovery when I learned of the rift that had developed between you and your brother and of your flight from the Horikawa Mansion. This so grieved and angered me that my illness grew worse. I was filled with such bitterness that I thought of killing myself, but I prayed that at least once more I might be able to pay my respects to my lord face to face. My prayers were answered, and I recovered. During that first long journey after getting well, I heard that your own secret travels had brought you safely to this residence. And so, I have just now arrived here. I have not the slightest recollection of what my lord says—that he bestowed his name upon me or that he placed Lady Shizuka in my care. (*He bows.*)

NARRATOR: Hardly has he spoken

Than the quick-tempered general

Addresses him sharply.

YOSHITSUNE: See here, don't feign ignorance, Tadanobu! When I set out from the Horikawa Mansion, you arrived from your home province just in the nick of time. You rescued Shizuka from a difficult situation, so I gave you a suit of my own armor, and I bestowed upon you the name Kurō Yoshitsune. (*Showing growing anger.*) After I entrusted Shizuka to you and we parted, I suppose you abandoned me as a fugitive and handed Shizuka over to Kamakura. And have you come here to seek out Yoshitsune's hiding place? Just now returned from your home province—what a double dealing bald-faced lie! I have gone through some difficult times, but I haven't grown weak minded! You go too far to think you can dupe me. Disloyal, two-faced villain! I'll have you seized and bound! Kamei! Suruga!

8. The third month of the lunar calendar of 1186.

NARRATOR: At his angry summons

The doughty warriors dash out, (*from SL*)

Tuck the hems of their robes

Into their sashes and stand

On Tadanobu's right and left,

Ready to draw their blades.

KAMEI: We've all heard your story. All right, hands behind you, Shiōbei.

SURAGA: Now, give us a full confession. Where is Lady Shizuka?

Or shall we kick you and tie you up?

KAMEI: Or shall we torture it out of you? What'll it be?

BOTH: What'll it be?!

NARRATOR: They crowd around him

Pressing for an answer.

Tadanobu throws before him

His swords, both long and short.⁹

TADANOBU: Wait, both of you! Do nothing rash.

KAMEI: Wait, eh? Well, do you have an explanation? If so, let's hear it. Come on, let's hear it!

NARRATOR: Then, at the peak of Tadanobu's predicament . . .

GATEKEEPER (*enters from the fence at SR*): My lord, Shiōbei! Tadanobu has arrived. He says he is escorting Lady Shizuka.

NARRATOR: At the gateman's words

All present are stunned!

YOSHITSUNE: What? Tadanobu has come again? I cannot understand this.

NARRATOR: Aroused by what he hears,

The present Tadanobu stands.

TADANOBU: Whoever it is who falsely assumes my name, he's an imposter and a villain! I'll tie him up and bring him before the general here, and that will clear my name of suspicion. (*He picks up his sword.*)

NARRATOR: He starts to dash off, but . . .

KAMEI: You stay right where you are! Don't move till the inves-

9. A gesture to show that he is unarmed and presents no threat.

igation is over. *(He pushes Tadanobu back, and together with Suruga he holds out his arms to block Tadanobu's movement.)*

NARRATOR: . . . and Kamei no Rokurō blocks his way.

YOSHITSUNE: No, wait Rokurō. Tadanobu is here, and yet another Tadanobu comes escorting Shizuka. There must be something at the bottom of all this. Bring him in at once.

KAMEI: As you wish, my lord.

NARRATOR: Kamei leaves for the neighboring room. *(Exits SR.)*

Apprehensive, Tadanobu is taciturn,

Casting eyes about his surroundings.

Now, Shizuka walks impatiently

Through Kawatsura's inner hall,

Restless her desire

In the months since parting

To meet her lord, to see his face.

(Shizuka enters hurriedly from SR, still carrying across her back the bundle wrapped in lavender cloth.)

SHIZUKA: Oh, is it you, my lord? How I've missed you!

(She runs to Yoshitsune, who is seated in the center of the open room.)

NARRATOR: Hecdleless of the eyes of those around her,

She clings to her lord,

All her pent up love and yearning

Showing in her tears.

YOSHITSUNE: Ah, I can well understand the lamentations of a woman's heart. As I told you when we parted, I must rely on the compassion of others, and so I could not cling to my own personal desires regarding you. That is why I had to treat you cold-heartedly. Tadanobu was accompanying you.

Where is he?

SHIZUKA: Why, he was with me till just now in the next room.

Hasn't he come in yet?

NARRATOR: She looks around.

SHIZUKA *(seeing Tadanobu seated at center SR, she points at him)*:

Oh, there he is. *(To Tadanobu:)* My, you got here quickly, didn't you. *(Teasing.)* I would have met our lord together with you, Tadanobu, but you just slipped on ahead and got

here first. Did you think you were advancing on a battlefield? You do like to do things your own way, don't you.

NARRATOR: Tadanobu's suspicions

Are not allayed, but multiply

At this bantering complaint.

TADANOBU: My lord made the same sort of inquiry, about which I have no recollection. I have only just now returned from the province of Dewa.¹⁰ Since I was given leave last year, this is the first time I have seen you.

SHIZUKA *(coquettishly)*: Oh, how you chatter away, making sport of me.

TADANOBU: I make no sport. I am quite serious.

SHIZUKA: There you go, still trying to take me in, and with a straight face too! *(She leans over the balustrade and regards Tadanobu.)*

NARRATOR: Amid this coquetry

Kamei no Rokurō returns. *(Kamei runs in from SR.)*

KAMEI: My lord, I went to bring in the Tadanobu whom we thought had accompanied Lady Shizuka here, but he isn't in the next room. I have inquired at the entryway, the main house, and at several other places, but nobody knows anything about him.

NARRATOR: Yoshitsune is puzzled.

YOSHITSUNE: See here, Shizuka, this person here *(pointing at Tadanobu)* says he has just returned from his home province and is not the Tadanobu to whom I entrusted you. The suspicious one, whom we cannot seem to find but who accompanied you here—might he not be an imposter who resembles Tadanobu? Has this occurred to you?

NARRATOR: As he speaks, Shizuka

Looks intently at Tadanobu.

SHIZUKA: Hmm, now that you mention it, somehow his under-robe and other parts of his dress seem different. *(Tadanobu stands and spreads out the broad sleeves of his robe for her to*

10. The large northern province stretching along the coast of the Japan Sea, encompassed today by Yamagata and Akita prefectures.

see.) Oh, wait a moment. Can it be that? Yes, it must be! *(She slaps her knee as Tadanobu resumes his seat.)* I just remembered something. The Hatsune Drum you gave me as a keepsake when we parted. *(She picks up the cloth wrapped bundle she was carrying when she entered and hugs it to herself.)* Here, as you see, I'm never parted from it. When I strike it, Tadanobu is always there to attend me. At Yawara and Yamazaki and at Ogura Village¹¹ and other places, he'd be nowhere to be seen. Whenever he was absent and when in my longing for you I would strike the drum to console myself, he would always come back to me. The way he was so strongly drawn to the drum's notes, he was like a person intoxicated. When I stopped sounding the drum, he would just stand there looking unconcerned, but he did seem so attached to the drum. I'd strike it the first time, and he'd stop and be sunk in thought. At the second and the third and fourth beat—my how he seemed to change! At the fifth beat he would rise up strangely; and at the sixth beat it was frightening how he would just stand there. I didn't strike the drum any more than that. When I heard that my lord was here, I was so impatient to hurry on that sometimes I would stray away from Tadanobu. Then I'd think of the drum, and if I'd strike it—how strange it was!—he seemed to appear before me as though out of nowhere. In my simple woman's heart I'd wonder if my eyes were playing tricks on me. I wondered what would happen once we got here.

YOSHITSUNE: Hmmm, he comes back to you when you strike the drum, you say. That very fact will make our investigation easier. Shizuka, there's something I wish you to do. You must use this drum and question this Tadanobu who escorted you here. If there is anything suspicious, make use of this sword.

NARRATOR: He reaches out and lays a sword before her.

YOSHITSUNE: I myself may not strike this drum, but you are free to play it. As I listen to its wondrous notes, I shall retire

11. All places in the vicinity of Kyoto.

and let the sound of the drum refresh me. Quickly now, beat the drum.

NARRATOR: These his parting words,

As to the inner room he goes,

While Kamei and Suruga

Lead Tadanobu away.

(Yoshitsune enters the shōji paneled room at SL. Kamei and Suruga lead Tadanobu out downstage at SL, leaving Shizuka alone in the open room. She then withdraws through the curtains of the arched doorway. At this point there is usually a change of narrator and his samisen accompanist.)

SCENE 5
THE FOX

Scene 5: The Fox

235

As she now moves forth
To carry out her questioning.²

(*Shizuka enters slowly through the curtains of the arched doorway, bringing with her the drum resting on a small stand.*)

Low she is in spirit,

But she takes the drum to hand,
As her lord has bid her,

Grasping it by the crimson cord
That twines about it

And modulates its tone.

She squeezes tight the cord

And to her shoulder lifts the drum.
Graceful are the movements of her hand

As she sounds its notes;
Clear and fresh the beats ring out.

(*Shizuka first goes through the motions of preparing the drum, wiping the drumheads, breathing on them to warm them prior to playing. With her left hand she lifts the drum to her right shoulder, hesitatingly strikes it with her right hand, then moves quickly to SR and looks around. She repeats this action of striking the drum and looking around several times.*)

Shizuka listens with her heart
To the wondrous notes,

Unmatched in all the world.
Such must have been the sound,

She thinks, of that drum of old
That hung in the Thunder Gate

In China's city of Kuai-chi.
Its notes were carried leagues

That numbered in the hundreds,
To be heard in the capital of Loyang.³

2. These opening lines do not appear in the standard editions of the text, including Tsurumi, *Takekida Izumo shin*. They were spoken, however, in the performance I saw in Tokyo's National Theater in 1981.

3. The sound of the bell was said to be audible in Loyang, some 1,000 kilometers to the north. Elaboration on the story in the work *Ruri tengu* says that

(*The scene remains the same, with only the traditional change of narrator and accompanist.*)

NARRATOR: Unlike the Sonohara broom
tree¹—

Apparent from afar

But vanishing upon approach—

Surely the man she saw was there,

Though who he is remains in doubt.

Soft are Shizuka's steps

1. A reference to a poem by Sakanoue Korenori (tenth century) in the *Shin kokin waka shin*, that refers to a legendary broom tree (*habukigiri*) on the plain of Sonohara on the border between old Shinano and Mino provinces (modern Nagano and Gifu prefectures, respectively). Like a mirage, from a distance the tree appears to exist, but when one approaches nearer it disappears. The poem also appears in *The Tale of Genji*, providing the title to the second chapter. See Edward G. Seidensticker's translation of *The Tale of Genji*, 48.

Now, as though beckoned onward
By the breezes of spring,

Sato Tadanobu comes and bows before her,
Rapture for the drumbeat clear upon his face.

(To the roll of drums and flute music, as Shizuka continues to beat the drum, a white fox bursts through the paneling facing the audience above the room enclosed by shoji. It descends to the floor, runs about the courtyard and dashes off to disappear behind the bamboo fencing at SR. In a rapid change, the fox puppet is replaced with that of Tadanobu. The puppet handler's costume is also quickly changed: strategic threads are pulled from the costume allowing the upper part to fold down, the inner lining of the top half now matching the under kimono and forming a new costume. Tadanobu is now dressed in formal attire, with long trousers sweeping the floor behind him, similar to the dress of the Tadanobu who has just left the stage. He ascends the stairway on the SR side of the open room, draws near the drum, and bows.)

Shizuka watches him there

But does not cease her drumming.
Tadanobu yields himself

To rapt enchantment with the sound,

As Shizuka studies him more closely.

Now she stays her hand,

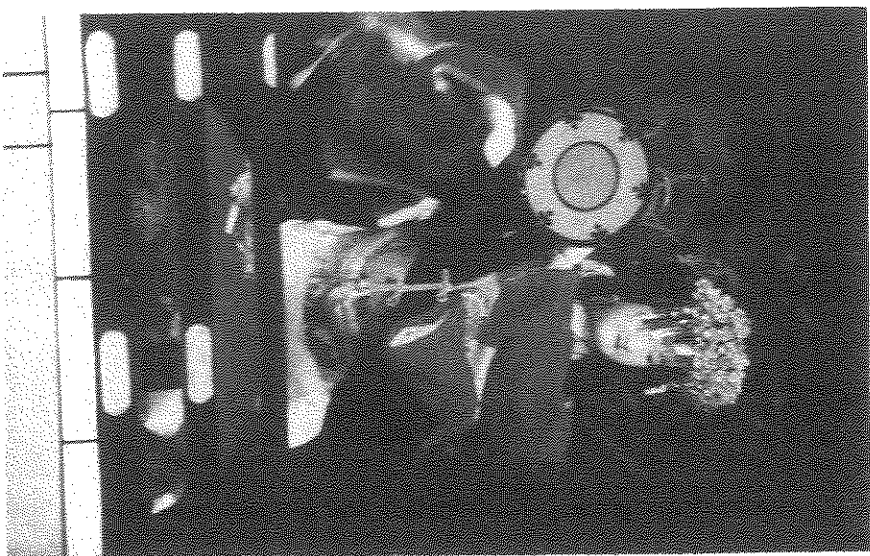
Perceiving in him one who's to be doubted.

She feigns a careless air.

(She puts the drum on a small wooden stand before her and slowly takes up the sword.)

SHIZUKA: You are late, Tadanobu. My lord Yoshitsune has waited impatiently to see you. Come now, let us go inside.

(She stands up, hiding the sword behind her back. Tadanobu is hesitant to rise.)



NARRATOR: She squeezes tight the cord

And to her shoulder lifts the drum.

Graceful are the movements of her hand

As she sounds its notes.

(Shizuka plays the drum to summon Tadanobu.)

(Act 4, scene 5)

the phenomenon was due to a white crane whose spirit flew into the drum and then flew away when the people from Loyang came to take the drum. See Yüda, *Bunraku jōruri shū*, 386, n. 58.

NARRATOR: Though Tadanobu nods assent,
He is slow to rise

And remains with eyes cast down.
Making sure he's off his guard,
Shizuka slashes with her sword.
Nimble, Tadanobu leaps and jumps aside.

TADANOBU: What is this? What are you doing?
NARRATOR: Thus challenged, Shizuka
Gives an affected laugh.

SHIZUKA: Ho ho ho ho ho ho. I see you are surprised. To
please you, I am but practicing my dance, which you've not
seen for some time—the dance that relates the tale of the
battle of Yashima.⁴

NARRATOR: She quickens the tempo of the drum and sings:
“Thus did the Genji and the Heike clash:

As the Heike boats approached the shore,
To the beaches moved the Genji troops.
The Heike ships rowed ever closer in,
And both sides sounded gongs and drums of war.”
Again, as Shizuka gazes on,
Tadanobu yields in childlike rapture
To the notes of the drum.

(*She returns the drum to its stand and again picks up the sword.*)
SHIZUKA: Tadanobu! You'll not escape me!

NARRATOR: Again she slashes at him,
But Tadanobu dodges
From the path of the blade,
Seizing his chance as he brushes past
To take a grip upon its hilt.

TADANOBU: What offense am I guilty of that you should try to
strike me unawares? I do not understand.

NARRATOR: He wrests the sword from her hand
And casts the weapon aside.



To the roll of drums and music of the flute, a fox
breaks through the upper paneling of the room where
Shizuka beats the Hatsune Drum. Then, as depicted
here, the puppet fox and its manipulator are lowered
by a stage suspension device that simulates magical
flight. (Act 4, scene 5)

⁴ A reminder of the act 4 travel scene (“The Journey With the Drum”) when
Shizuka and Tadanobu re-enacted the Yashima battle where Tadanobu’s brother
Tsunobu died while protecting Yoshitsune from the arrows of Noritsune.



TADANOBU: What offense am I guilty of that you should try to strike me unawares? I do not understand. (Act 4, scene 5)

SHIZUKA: False Tadanobu! Reveal yourself! *(She beats him about the head with the drum.)* I, Shizuka, have been commanded to question you. If you will not talk, here's how I will make you speak.

NARRATOR: She snatches up the drum
And flicks her hand across its head.
Tadanobu, roused by the tapping
Of the woman's silken hand,
Bows down abjectly.

"Yes, yes, I will," he says,
As Shizuka strikes the drum
To wring confession from him.

SHIZUKA: Well then! Reveal yourself!
(She throws the drum aside and again picks up the sword, brandishing it at Tadanobu. He leaps back toward SR and moves to the cover of the flats that run across the front of the stage as the ominous roll of drums commences again. In another quick change, he rises up from

the flats now clad in the black robe with its gold embroidered designs that he wore earlier when he and Shizuka were traveling in the Yoshino Mountains—"The Journey With the Drum." He leaps back into the open room and bows before Shizuka.)

NARRATOR: Yet silent he remains,

Not a word escapes him,

As he stays prostrate before her.

At length he lifts his head,

And picks up the Drum of Hasure.

With deference, with deep reverence,

He lifts it to his head and bows,

Then back again he places it
Before the Lady Shizuka.

He rises with composure, descends
Into the garden's broad expanse,

And there with heavy heart

He bends his wretched body low to bow.

(Since Tadanobu now confesses that he is in fact a fox, he is so designated from this point.)

FOX: Until this day, I had managed to hide so that people did not know of me. But now that trouble has arisen and suspicion has attached to the true Tadanobu who has returned from his home province, I am obliged to reveal myself. The story has its beginning in that Hasure Drum. It was in the reign of Emperor Kanmu that within the palace prayers were offered up for rain.⁵ Two foxes, one female and one male, which had lived for a thousand years and had acquired magical powers, were hunted down in this very province of Yamato, and their living skins were used to make that drum. Sacred dances were then offered as solace to the god of rain. The sound of drums was originally thought to be like the sound of waves, and the fox is regarded as a creature of the Yin forces, so the prayers and drumbeats brought water and the rain fell. At this, all the people and the farmers raised

5. See act 1, scene 1, "The Imperial Palace," note 8.

their voices in joy for the first time. And so the Emperor gave to the drum the name of Hatsune—First Voice. That drum is made from the skins of my parents; I am the child of that drum.

NARRATOR: At his story, Shizuka feels

Her hair stands up in fright.

Then she calms her racing heart.

SHIZUKA: Hmm. If this drum is made from your parents and you are a child of the drum, then you must be a fox!

(Again the ominous drums roll and another quick change of costume is effected by the pulling of special threads in the costume of both the puppet and its operator. The fox's black robe in his guise as Tadanobu is removed to reveal beneath it a white gown, edged in red and with red fox fire designs (kitsunebi) dotting its surface. The puppet handler, in some performances, is similarly dressed.)

FOX⁶: Yes, that is true. When my parents were captured and killed for those prayers for rain, I was yet a young fox and understood nothing about parents and children, or about sorrow. I have grown up now. I can transform myself into other forms, and I have lived long enough to acquire many magical powers, but not for a single day have I taken care of my parents. If I do not repay to them the love they showed by bringing me into this world, then I am no better than such lowly creatures as pigs and wolves. I am, thus, the most lowly of all the 64,000 foxes in my family, scorned as nothing but a wild fox of the fields, with no hope of realizing my desire to rise in position among my kind.⁷ When a child is

6. This long monologue of the fox, as well as the one that precedes it, is a minutely choreographed presentation as the magical fox relates his story. The narrator delivers the fox's lines in a high pitched voice and somewhat staccato manner, and the fox's quick movements are animal-like, with leaps and crouches punctuating his story. His hands (a special puppet hand is used) are held with fingers tucked in toward the palm and the wrist bent sharply downward to suggest paws. Notations of the movements have been omitted here so as not to interrupt the flow of the fox's monologue, considered a highlight of the play. For details of stage movement, see the production notes in Yûda, *Banriku jûnari shû*, 22ff (bottom of page, marked by triangles).

7. Even among foxes, it seems, there were hierarchies, the lowest being the



The fox, now transformed from his guise as Tadanobu, mimes the action as he tells his story. His costume is decorated with representations of the magical will-o'-the-wisp flames (*kitsunebi*) associated with the fox; special hands are used, the fingers bent downward to suggest a fox's paws. (Act 4, scene 5)

unfilial to his parents, human beings call him a mere brute, say he's a worthless fox. Yet the young dove shows deference to its parent by perching on a lower branch, and the crow brings food to its parent in return for its own upbringing. All these are filial acts. If this is true even among birds, then

⁶"wild fox of the fields." It is not clear why the figure 64,000 is used, except to suggest a very large number.

how much more must it be so for a fox who can speak the language of men and knows their feelings! How can it be, then, that even the most stupid of beasts would fail to know about filial love? But . . . my parents are gone. My only hope to be a faithful child lies in that drum. Through the lofty nobility my parents achieved over a millennium, their spirits now lodge in those skins. And since their very essence has entered into the drum, the instrument is, in short, my mother and my father. I felt it would be my highest act of filial duty to accompany and protect them. And yet—oh the wretchedness of it all!—the drum has been kept within the imperial palace, and I have been afraid to approach it because of the countless gods that stand guard at night. I lost all hope; it must be, I thought, that I had done some wrong to a human being in a previous life. The sutra that speaks of cause and effect says that one who harms another will be reborn a fox.⁸ Ah, how the bitterness grows within me. Each day three times and thrice at night it pains me through and through; my tears are those of blood. The fox fires that appear as drifting will-o-the-wisp flames are blazes that scorch at my breast. But even one such as I may be blessed by heaven, though I may bear a heavy burden of guilt from a former life. For, as fortune would have it, the Hatsune Drum passed into Lord Yoshitsune's hands. It emerged from the imperial palace, and I was no longer afraid to go near it. How happy, how overjoyed I was! It has been thanks to Lord Yoshitsune that from that day I have been in attendance on the drum. At the grove in front of the Inari Shrine, I thought that if Tadanobu should happen to appear I might be able to repay my gratitude to Lord Yoshitsune by consoling you in your grief. And so I became that Tadanobu. And as a reward for saving you, Lady Shizuka, from danger—though it was more than a mere beast deserved—I received the honored name

8. This may be a reference to the Buddhist sutra *Gōhō shōkoku kyō*, which does not refer to foxes in particular but says simply that such wrongdoers will be reborn as beasts. See Yūda, *Bunroku jōnuri shū*, 223, n. 20.

Genkurō Yoshitsune, a descendant of Emperor Seiwa. It is a blessing that fills me with awe. For this reason too, I wish to do all I can to fulfill my duty to my parents. They are first in my thoughts, and my heart's desire has been fulfilled. To have been granted the honored name of the general is the same to me as having the good karma to be reborn as a human being instead of a beast. Thus, my parents are yet all the more dear to me. Out of longing for your lord, you, Lady Shizuka, play upon this drum, from which I cannot be separated for even a moment. The notes do not seem unusual to you, but to my ears they are the voices of my parents calling me to them, and that is why I have been summoned to come back to the drum so many times. The sounds you just played were the words of my father and my mother. They tell me that for their sakes I have made Tadanobu's master doubt him, that for a while I have brought trouble to that loyal servant. This is wrong, they say, and they tell me to make haste and go back whence I came. There is nothing now for me to do but to return to my home in the fields. In your compassion, Lady Shizuka, I beg you convey to General Yoshitsune my humble apology for having deceived him.

NARRATOR: Up from the courtyard he leaps

And faces toward the drum,

The drum that is to him

Both a father and a mother.

His words are couched in reverence,

His voice so filled with tears.

More loving is this fond farewell

Than one by human voices spoken.

FOX: Father, mother, I will do as you say. And now I take my leave. But how this farewell grieves me. (*Weeps.*) When I was first separated from my parents, and I knew nothing of what had happened, I wept throughout the night. And as each day passed, I lived with the desire to be, however briefly, at their side and to repay them for the kindness of raising me. The days and months of longing have now been four hundred

years.⁹ When I think how they were killed in order that there might be prayers for rain, what rancor do I feel toward the shining sun! They say that raindrops falling from a cloudless sky betokens the marriage of foxes. But no, they are my tears. Though I have rejoiced that my desire to be near my parents has been fulfilled, I think of my own fox-wife, grown dear to me over the years, and of the fox-children born to us. And though my cruel heart has been drawn to them and their comfortless misery I know not how many times, yet I have left them abandoned in the wilderness, not knowing if they have starved, or frozen to death, or have been taken by hunters. Do they long for me as I have longed for my parents? My mind so tormented by anxiety for my family shows how ensnared I am by the unseverable bonds of our karma, by the chains of my loving devotion to them. Since I abandoned my beloved wife and children—oh, how it crushed my heart to do so!—and came to be near the drum last spring, barely a full year has passed. What shall I do now that I have been told to leave? Shall I simply sigh and go away? If I fail to obey my parents, it will be an unfilial act, and all of my devotion will have gone for nothing. What evil did I do in a former life that I must go back to my home so filled with sorrow? At least I have a memory that will be known to later generations: the name Genkurō bestowed upon me by General Yoshitsune. Yet, how am I to bear this sorrow? Lady Shizuka, please pity me, please understand my heart.

NARRATOR: He weeps, he pleads, and clings in his heart;
Down he sinks, wailing out his grief.
In the province of Yamato, wretched indeed
Is the legend of Genkurō the Fox.
Shizuka, true to her woman's heart,
Is not without compassion.

9. As Yūda (*Bumraku jōmuri shū*, 224, n.6) notes, from the time of Emperor Kammu's prayers for rain in 786 to the time of the play's setting, 1186, is four hundred years.

Seeing his eyes cloud over,
Filled with earnest tears,
She turns toward the inner room.

(*She moves toward the SL room and bows before it.*)

SHIZUKA: My lord, are you there?

NARRATOR: She has but spoken when the shōji part.

(*Yoshitsune emerges from the SL room and seats himself on a cushion.*)

YOSHITSUNE: I have heard it all. So, you are not a human being at all, are you? I, Yoshitsune, have never known what it is to be a fox, but now I feel great pity for you.

NARRATOR: The fox, at Yoshitsune's words,
Lowers its head and bows

Over and over, kneeling down

In reverence to the noble general.

He slowly rises from his place,

And gazes, gazes back

Longingly at the drum.

He neither leaves nor disappears,

But the onlookers' eyes are clouded,

And like the mists of spring . . .

He is gone.

Yoshitsune's heart is much aggrieved.

(*The fox moves slowly to SR, with many backward glances at the drum. As the drums roll to suggest his wizardry, a flat painted as a cloudy mist is lowered at SR, and behind this the fox disappears.*)

YOSHITSUNE: Call him back. Strike the drum. Perhaps he'll come back to its notes. Quickly, the drum, the drum!

NARRATOR: Shizuka lifts the drum again

And strikes it. Yet, strangely,

No sound comes forth.

SHIZUKA: What's this?

NARRATOR: She grasps the drum anew,

But though she beats upon it,

The drum is silent.

SHIZUKA: Oh, the spirits of his parents that remain with the drum are saddened by this separation from their child, and

that must be why the sound has ceased. Can even those who are not human long so for a child?

NARRATOR: She is heartsick at the thought.

YOSHITSUNE: Ah, how I am struck by the constancy of affection in all living creatures. I was never filial for a day toward my dead father Yoshitomo, cut down by Osada Tadamune,¹⁰ and I grew up hiding on Mount Kurama hoping I might serve my brother Yoritomo. How bitter it is that my fortunes in the battles of Yashima and Dannoura in the western sea and all my loyal services have become my very enemy. Here I have been abandoned by the brother whom I have looked on as a parent. Genkurō, to whom I gave my name, is affected by some evil from a former life. It is the same with me; what unbroken attachments, and in what sort of previous existence, can have visited upon me such a karma as this?

NARRATOR: To Yoshitsune's tears of pity for the fox Shizuka now joins her own.

In the courtyard, Genkurō the Fox,

Still unseen to their eyes,

Considers the lot that fate has dealt him

Yet cannot bear to liken it

To Yoshitsune's misfortunes.

Loudly he wails his lament;

And with his cry,

The enfolding mist of spring

Vanishes away,

And there he stands revealed.

Yoshitsune rises, picks up the drum.

YOSHITSUNE: Ah, there you are, Genkurō. Hear me. For a long time you have watched over Shizuka while she was in your care. I cannot find the words to thank you. This drum I have

10. During the Heiji insurrection of 1159-60, Tadamune (dates unknown) and another warrior treacherously attacked and killed Yoshitomo as he was fleeing to the northeast.

received from the imperial court, precious though it is to me, I give it to you.

NARRATOR: He holds out the drum.

FOX: What? *(He leaps up, advances to the center stairway.)* You say you will give me the drum? Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you! *(He receives the drum on its stand from Yoshitsune, then withdraws into the courtyard somewhat to SR and bows.)* This drum—my parents for whom I've longed so dearly—why, I'll not be shy about it and refuse. I will accept it! And, in gratitude for your profound kindness, I shall henceforth stay close to you and protect you to the fullest whenever you are in danger. How wonderfully happy I am! *(Strightens up, as a thought comes to him.)* Oh, I almost forgot. I've been so engrossed in relating my own life to you that I failed to tell you something. All of the evil monks of the temple plan to raid this mansion tonight, when of course they hope to attack you at close quarters. But, by my magical powers to transform myself, I will trick the lot of them and draw them in here. Then I'll split them all right down the middle and slice them up sideways. *(He mimes the action energetically.)* When they try to attack you in a bunch, I'll come in at them from all directions like the legs of a spider, and I'll slash them up and down and sideways, and slantwise right and slantwise left! *(Still miming vigorously.)* If they strike high and sideways at me, I'll duck and let the blow pass by; if they swing their swords at my legs, I'll fly into the air. With my nimble magic I will do with them as I please, then turn them over to you for final dispatch! Be sure you are on your guard!

NARRATOR: With that, he takes the drum and bows.

And then, as though borne off on wings,

He vanishes without a trace.

(Production practices vary at this point. In earlier productions, the fox disappeared by exiting over a hedge at SR. Nowadays, the puppet performance often imitates the extremely popular Kabuki practice of flying through the air. The puppet operator, having previously been

fitted with a body harness, is lifted off the stage into the air as he holds and operates the fox puppet and is drawn off high into the SR wings, seeming to leave "as though borne off on wings.")

Listening to all of this,

Tadanobu is amazed.

Along with Kamei and Sunuga

He approaches his lord.

TADANOBU: So eloquent an expression of fidelity by a living creature has cleared away both my general's and my own suspicions. Nothing could bring me greater joy.

NARRATOR: Hardly has he finished

Than in comes Kawatsura Hōgen.

KAWATSURA: Confucius said that he never discussed prodigies, fears of strength, disorders of nature, or spirits,¹¹ but this Genkurō says that the priests of the temple are coming to attack you tonight. This coincides exactly with what I secretly overheard a little while ago. What do you think about our taking matters into our own hands and sallying forth to attack our enemies?

NARRATOR: Tadanobu answers.

TADANOBU: I have an excellent plan. Though you gave your name to the fox, you would originally have bestowed it upon me. If I take my lord's place and the attackers kill me, then the whole matter will be finished. I beg you most strongly to grant me leave to carry out this scheme.

NARRATOR: To his urgent plea

His general replies.

YOSHITSUNE: There are matters that I must consider, so for the moment do not go. If you would deceive these priests and die calling yourself by my name, then I too will die. There is no need for you to be killed.

NARRATOR: With these warm and gracious words,

To Tadanobu he hands

The sword thrust in his sash.

11. From the Confucian *Analekts*. My translation is adapted slightly from that of Arthur Waley, translator, *The Analects of Confucius*, 127.

He summons Shizuka to his side,
And together they withdraw.

(Yoshitsune, Shizuka, and Tadanobu enter the center curtained doorway.)

Hardly a moment passes, when,
Unescorted, in barges Wild Hokkyō
Boasting and brandishing his sword.¹²

(He enters from SR.)

HOKKYŌ *(speaking to Kawatsura)*: Ah Lord Hōgen, I am most gratified at your swift appearance. Hearing that you had arrested Yoshitsune, I have come at once to congratulate you.

NARRATOR: As he speaks, all present exchange glances.

"Surely," thinks Lord Hōgen,

"In gratitude for the drum,

The fox has tricked this lout

And sent him to us."

He nods in silence to himself.

KAWATSURA: To be sure, to be sure. He is tied up within. Come and see him.

NARRATOR: He starts to leave,

Giving to Kamei a wink.

A shout, and with his strong right arm

Kamei grabs the priest.

Quickly, with a thud,

He slams him to the floor,

Holding him down

And trampling him under foot.

Swiftly he binds his captive with a rope,

Hauls him into the air,

And prances off to show him to his lord.

Now surely it is clear

That all is the clever scheme

Of that Genkurō who is not Yoshitsune.

12. Though the text says "sword," in production Hokkyō usually carries a long halberd.

Next to enter: Demon Sadohō, (*also from SR*)

Looking belligerently about,

As though he'll handle anyone.

Unaware he is bewitched

By the unseen Genkurō,

He thrusts out his white-robed sleeve

And glares about,

Peering into every nook and cranny.

SADOHŌ: See here, Lord Hōgen, one of us came just now to congratulate you on the capture of Yoshitsune. He hasn't come back, and I thought everything would be handled quickly. Now, where is the prisoner?

NARRATOR: A look of triumph on his face,

He moves along the corridor,

Only to be kicked backwards

And lose his footing on the floor.

Then the nimble Suruga

Gives him a taste of his footwork.

Before he can vent his chagrin,

Like his partner, off he's dragged within.

Now comes number three—

The doctor priest, Yakuibō,

Glim and sullen faced

As he enters the room.

YAKUIBŌ (*he moves in as though pushed from behind*): Such a hurry, such a blasted hurry! I'm going! Now, wait! My robe will get torn if you drag me like that! What a rude attendant you are!

NARRATOR: Bewitched by Genkurō,

All his protests go for naught,

For within him move

The workings of the fox.

KAWATSURA: Ah, I have been waiting for you, Yakuibō. Please, this way.

NARRATOR: He motions the place with a nod.

Then, with a wrenching grip

He twists the prelate's arm.

YAKUIBŌ: Oh! Ouchi! Hey, what're you doing?

KAWATSURA: This!

NARRATOR: And up upon his shoulder

He hoists the heavy priest.

KAWATSURA: I, Kawatsura Hōgen, will prepare a homemade feast made up of you alone. I'm just waiting for Lord Yoshitsune's bill of fare to cut you up to order.

NARRATOR: Laughing, he goes within.

Now comes one unmatched in pluck,

Yet unaware of these events,

Pounding on the ground

The ferrule of his great bare bladed lance.

Beneath his robe is armor,

Its segments linked by chains

And overlapping like a prawn's shell.

Cowl-like about his head is wound

The long stole of a priest.

The one who enters now with swaying gait,

No ordinary man—

Yokawa no Kakuhan.

In the courtyard, he draws himself full height,

And calls out as he walks . . .

KAKUHAN: Master Kawatsura, where are you? Some traveling priests have come here. Are they inside? Quickly, I would speak with you. (*Entering, like the others, from SR, he stops, surveys his surroundings and turns toward SR.*)

NARRATOR: From the shōji behind him

A voice calls out.

VOICE: You, general of the Heike, Lord of Noto, Noritsune! Wait!

NARRATOR: Unthinking, he looks back sharply.

KAKUHAN: Hmm. A voice, but there is no one there. It could hardly have been calling me. But it did give me a start, and

some embarrassment, this calling out of a name I do not know. Ha ha ha ha ha. There's no one there, no reason to become rattled.

NARRATOR: He mutters to himself

As he is about to go.

VOICE: Ah, cowardly Noritsune, Lord of Noto! Long have I waited for you, I, Kurō Hōgan Yoshitsune.

NARRATOR: Suddenly the shōji are flung open.

(*Yoshitsune emerges from the SR room.*)

Noritsune turns, hoping to confront his foe.

With the long handle of his lance

Tucked beneath his arm,

His face is that of one about to charge.

Fearless before such a countenance,

Yoshitsune smiles.

YOSHITSUNE: You may try to disguise the red banner of the Heike beneath those priestly robes, but you cannot hide it. You, Noritsune, famed as a swimmer, pretended to drown yourself off the waters of Yashima.¹³ You dived to the bottom then later surfaced. I have long known that you were alive; your face is unmistakable. Don't deny it!

NARRATOR: He speaks in elegant phrases.

KAKUHAN: What insolence! Whether I be Noritsune or anyone else, are you such a sycophant that you think appearing here without armor to do battle with Kakuhan will gain you his mercy? I'm obliged, Kurō Yoshitsune, to learn that you hold your life so dear.

NARRATOR: He laughs in derision.

YOSHITSUNE: You seem to have a high opinion of yourself. I may not equal you with the bow, but your sword is no match for mine. If you wish to attack Yoshitsune with a Heike blade no longer blessed by providence, go ahead and try, Lord of Noto!

13. Noritsune actually died in the last great battle between the Genji and Heike clans at Dannoura.

NARRATOR: Hardly has he spoken Than Noritsune with his lance Makes a sweep across the dais.

But on his short sword

Yoshitsune catches the stroke

With a clanging parry.

A lunge at Yoshitsune's body

With the lance's ferrule

Is taken neatly, kicked aside.

Then, finding no opening to his foe,

And in contrast with his own defiance,

Yoshitsune withdraws.

(*Yoshitsune moves back into the SL room.*)

NORITSUNE: You'll not escape! I will not let you!

NARRATOR: He kicks away the shōji

Barring entry to the inner room

And charges in. But what is this?

There, ensconced upon a regal seat,

And lovely in his youth,

Sits the Emperor Antoku.

NORITSUNE: Oh! How mean and shameful of me! My liege, how do you come to be here?

NARRATOR: Humbly posing his query,

His breast is in a tumult.

In an exalted voice, the Emperor speaks.

ANTOKU: I had heard that your nurse and all of our clan had drowned in the sea, but that was not so for Noritsune, was it?

NORITSUNE: You are right, my lord.

NARRATOR: In response to the Emperor,

Noritsune snatches away the cowl

Hiding his jet black hair.¹⁴

Arranging the sleeves of his armor,

He bows.

14. Proof that he is not a true priest, whose head would be shaved.

NORITSUNE: It was Sanuki no Rokurō, the son of my wet nurse, who shouted out that he was Lord of Noto, Noritsune. Then, clasp ing on either side Aki no Tarō and his brother, he leaped into the sea and died. I, Noritsune, came up on a beach that no one knew about. With the help of that shaman of a priest, Yamashina Hokkyō, I disguised myself as Kakuhan. Now I have burst into this room seeking to take vengeance on Yoshitsune, only to find your gracious Majesty here. Have you been taken prisoner, my lord? I beg Your Majesty to tell me what has happened.

NARRATOR: Even the youthful monarch

Is blinded by his tears.

ANTOKU: As you know, Noritsune, I escaped from the palace at Yashima. As I waited here for help in this disappointing world, I encountered Yoshitsune, and I found compassion in a warrior of the Genji. Tomomori, feeling himself disgraced, pleaded with Yoshitsune on my behalf and then cast himself into the sea. My coming here after that and our meeting today have all been arranged by Yoshitsune. I was born the master of Japan, but I must have given offense to the Heavenly Goddess of the Sun, for I have been a torment to the people of the country that I rule over. In this narrow land and in my present straits, I yearn for my mother. And she must long, as she did in the Capital, to see the white snows of Mount Fuji, the spring blossoms of Yoshino. But she is in the village of Ohara.¹⁵ For one like myself, who longs so for his mother, what meaning can there be in either the cherry blossoms or Yoshino? Have pity, Noritsune, for so wretched a fate as mine. (*He weeps.*)

NARRATOR: And with this, down he sinks in tears.

How wretched is he, what loss he has known.

NORITSUNE: Ah, we have failed you, we have failed you, Tomomori and I! What splendid plans, what ingenious strata-

15. Following the Heike defeat, Antoku's mother, Kameinon'in, became a nun and went to spend the remainder of her days in the Jakkōin, a temple located in the village of Ohara a little to the north of Kyoto.

gens we had, and all have been found out by Yoshitsune! How could our fortunes on the battlefield have all gone so away? Ah, but there was no help for it, how bitter it all is now.

NARRATOR: In humiliation, he gnashes his teeth

Till it seems the blood would flow.

So tightly clenched his fists,

The nails seem to grow

Right through his palms.

So heavy his grief, his eyelids feel

Pressed beneath a ponderous weight.

He cannot bear the strain.

Suddenly, his clamped shut eyes

Now open wide.

NORITSUNE: Ah, I have misunderstood. When I sought to grapple with Yoshitsune at the battle of Yashima, he leaped across eight vessels, retreating toward his own boats in order to seek out what lay at the bottom of our strategy. That was not cowardice, was it? And now, fleeing from me to these inner compartments: he knew of my plan and had me come before your imperial countenance. Surely, that was a warrior's mercy. I see, I've been saved on this occasion. But I shall come again to do battle with him another time. Until then, Your Majesty, please come with me to my hiding place. I shall make the wide world yours to rule once again, and I will bring you to you mother. Come, I shall stand attendance on you.

NARRATOR: He sweeps the Emperor into his arms,

His right hand gripping his long lance.

NORITSUNE: Though this floating world is a cheerless place,

know that you will yet have your reign.

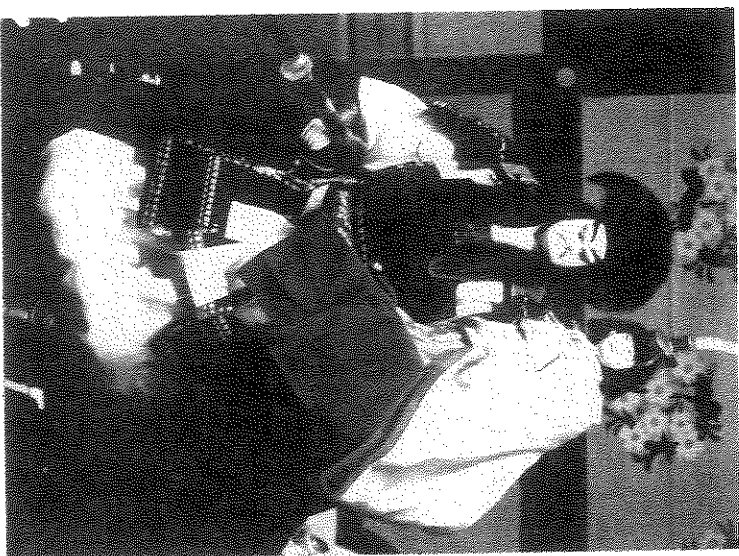
NARRATOR: Thus he addresses his sovereign.

As he is about to leave,

Sharp voices cry out,

And then comes the sound

Of three blades at their work.



NARRATOR: He sweeps the Emperor into his arms,
His right hand gripping his long lance.

(Kakuhiko holds the young Emperor in his arms.) (Act 4, scene 5)

Quickly he pulls his lance beside him.
Hardly has he made a backward glance,
When in dash Kamei and Suroga
And Kawatsura Hogen, *(all from SR)*
Each with bloody swords
And severed heads in their hands.

(During this narration, Yoshitsune withdraws through the curtained archway.)

KAWATSURA: You behave like a coward, Lord of Noto. See how
we've slain your followers one by one! For shame, Noritsune,

to flee with the Emperor as a hostage. The gate has been
shut, you cannot escape. Now then, do you fight, or do you
surrender? Make your choice!

NARRATOR: In a chorus they fling down the challenge,
But no sooner have the words been spoken
Than angrily Noritsune glares back.

NORITSUNE: How dare you wag your jaws with words of sur-
render, or compare me with that rabble of priests! Why, I
could take each one of your heads off with me, but why
should I waste time on you? I am thankful that Yoshitsune
placed the Emperor in my care. But you quite amaze me,
running away with no thanks to me for not killing you. If I
didn't think it would defile my attendance on His Majesty,
I'd slaughter the lot of you, you miserable thugs! Stand back
and give three bows in respect!

ALL THREE: Such insolent defiance, such effrontery! Let's take
him on and put an end to his boasting.

NARRATOR: Arms spread, the trio surrounds him,
And closes in, kicking sand about.

Noritsune draws himself up tall,
Towering above, his eyes turned down upon them,
Standing like a fleet-footed god.

As they glare at one another,
The Emperor, in his fear,
Looks like one for whom

The thread of life might soon be cut.

Yoshitsune shouts out.

*(Yoshitsune re-enters through the curtained archway. He is now dressed
in courtly robes.)*

YOSHITSUNE: Wait, all of you! Do not act rashly!

NARRATOR: There he stands in tall court hat,

Dressed in a flowing hunting cloak,

No weapons in his hands.

YOSHITSUNE: Make way for the Emperor's progress. You show
want of respect if you block his passage or throw into disar-
ray the deference of a vassal to his lord. Be still, all of you. I,

Yoshitsune, will also bid the Emperor farewell. As you see, I have prepared appropriate robes for myself. You may say that I am letting Noritsune escape by himself, but he has neither the power to fly up to heaven nor the skill to burrow into the earth. How can he hope to escape? None of you lay a hand on him. Tadanobu happens not to be here just now, but it is only fitting that I should let him strike down the enemy of his brother Tsuginobu and dispel the dead man's rancor in the hell of endless strife. You, Noritsune, live in a world constrained about you, and I too shrink away from society's eyes. We have neither castles nor shields to protect us. So let our differences be settled here on the battlefield of Yoshino, the cherry trees our battle towers.¹⁶ Since it has been proclaimed that the Emperor drowned at sea, and since his role within the palace has come to an end, it matters not which of us wins or loses. But nothing untoward is to happen to His Majesty.

NORITSUNE (*snering*): Hoo, a commendable speech, Yoshitsune. I am most pleased. Noritsune does not concern himself with trifles; my objective is not Yoshitsune alone. I shall also take the puny head of Yoritomo, who has arrogated the realm to himself, and then I will restore my Emperor's rule. When that happens, perhaps he may let Yoshitsune have a manor of his own.

YOSHITSUNE: Yaa, your words grow tedious, Noritsune. Never mind the designs you have on me. But I will not let pass your animosity to my brother Yoritomo!

NARRATOR: On his sword the general claps his hand,
But swiftly it appears
That Genkurō the fox—
Who borrowed Tadanobu's form,
And who is thankful for the name
Bestowed by Yoshitsune—
Has swept into the depths

16. This line accounts for part of the play's subtitle.

Of Yoshitsune's heart to soothe his ire.
The unconscious calming
Of Yoshitsune's mind—

All the work of his unseen guardian.

NORITSUNE: Farewell, then, Yoshitsune. I go, but I will show you my gratitude for your having spared the Emperor's life: call me Noritsune or call me Lord of Noto, we shall not fight. When next we meet, know me as Yokawa no Kakuhan; in the Yoshino mountains I will confront Tadanobu, and there we will do battle. At that time, at that time indeed, both our lives will hang in the balance.

NARRATOR¹⁷: "Make way, my menials,
For the imperial progress!
Assemble the escort!" shouts Kakuhan,
And once again he takes the Emperor
Up into his arms.

But Antoku is a sovereign
Who holds no sway in his realm,
And Noritsune is a vassal
Who holds no office of the land,
So only as Yokawa no Kakuhan
May he serve as an escort for his lord.
Though foes they yet remain,
Yoshitsune calls out loudly, "Clear the way!"
Majesty there is here,
And scores yet for the settling,
And the grace of a warrior's compassion.
Taking the procession's lead
Is Kawatsura Hōgen,
With Suruga as his footman
And Kamei as lower houseman.
No officers of the court, these men,
And though they hold in check
Their spoiling for a fight,

17. The first three lines are delivered in the slow chantlike style of the Nō theater.

Unwittingly their swords are breached
A scant space from their sheaths,
To show the glint of metal there within.

YOSHITSUNE (*to the Emperor*): We will be noticed at the gate,
Your Majesty. So, by your leave, please excuse us from attending you further.

NARRATOR: In deep respect he bows.

Yet both the generals

Glare at one another

Across the space between them

At this parting.

Genkurō Yoshitsune,

Genkurō the Fox—

Famed are these names

In the tales told in Japan.

Act Five

SCENE I

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF YOSHINO¹

NARRATOR: Mountains mantled in white,
Branches etched sharply
Under a burden of snow:
An impressive vista indeed.
In a loud voice, Satō Tadanobu calls out.

(*Tadanobu has for the moment assumed the identity of Yoshitsune.*)

TADANOBU: I am Minamoto no Yoshitsune,
scion of Emperor Seiwa, holder of the fifth
court rank and officer in the Imperial Constabulary! You followers of Yoritomo: at-

1. I have discovered no description of the stage set for this scene. One may presume it is a fairly simple one depicting a snow scene, perhaps with white mantled mountains in the distance and a ravine closer in. Doubtless the narration was intended to convey to the audience additional details of the setting, for it would be difficult to stage the conflict that is described.