

CHANTER: She sobs and wails aloud. Her husband also cries out and sheds incessant tears in all too understandable emotion.

[OHATSU]: We could talk forever, but it serves no purpose. Kill me, kill me quickly!

CHANTER: She hastens the moment of death.

[TOKUBEI]: I'm ready.

CHANTER: He swiftly draws his dagger.

[TOKUBEI]: The moment has come. *Namu Amida. Namu Amida.*

CHANTER: But when he tries to bring the blade against the skin of the woman he's loved and held and slept with so many months and years, his eyes cloud over, his hand shakes. He tries to steady his weakening resolve, but still he trembles, and when he thrusts, the point misses. Twice or thrice the flashing blade deflects this way and that until a cry tells it has struck her throat.

[TOKUBEI]: *Namu Amida. Namu Amida. Namu Amida Butsu.*

CHANTER: He twists the blade deeper and deeper, but the strength has left his arm. When he sees her weaken, he stretches forth his hands. The last agonies of death are indescribable.

[TOKUBEI]: Must I lag behind you? Let's draw our last breaths together.

CHANTER: He thrusts and twists the razor in his throat, until it seems the handle or the blade must snap. His eyes grow dim, and his last painful breath is drawn away at its appointed hour.²⁴ No one is there to tell the tale, but the wind that blows through Sonezaki Wood transmits it, and high and low alike gather to pray for these lovers who beyond a doubt will in the future attain buddhahood. They have become models of true love.

[*Chikamatsu jōruri shū jō*, NKBT 49: 21–36, translated by Donald Keene]

THE DRUM OF THE WAVES OF HORIKAWA (HORIKAWA NAMI NO TSUTSUMI, 1707)

The Drum of the Waves of Horikawa, a three-act contemporary-life play, was first performed at the Takemoto Theater in Osaka in the Second Month of 1707. Like *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, *Horikawa* draws on a contemporary scandal. In the Sixth Month of 1706, a vendetta was carried out in Kyoto during the Gion Festival by a samurai called ōkura Hikohachirō, in the service of the lord of the Tottori Domain, who was assisted by his son Bunshichi, his younger sister Kura, and Fuu, the younger sister of his wife. In the Sixth Month of 1705, Hikohachirō had gone to Edo, following his lord on the alternate attendance system, and had

stayed there until the Fifth Month of the following year. During his absence his wife, Tane, committed adultery with Miyai Den'emon, who was the domain drummer as well as the drum teacher of Hikohachirō's children. Rumors of the affair spread, and the younger sister Kura informed Hikohachirō in Edo. Deeply angered, Hikohachirō immediately took leave, returned to his domain, and questioned his wife, who confessed to the entire matter. On the sixteenth of the Fifth Month, Hikohachirō killed his wife, received permission to hunt down the adulterer, and, on the seventh of the Sixth Month, entered Den'emon's house and killed him.

Chikamatsu changed the names of the chief figures only slightly: Ōkura Hikohachirō became Ogura Hikokurō; the drum teacher Miyai Den'emon is Miyaji Gen'emon; Bunshichi became Bunroku; Kura takes the name Yura; and Fuu was changed to Ofuji. While preserving the outlines of the incident, Chikamatsu created a new drama by adding the villain Isobe Yukaemon and by focusing on the wife, Otane, whom he transformed into a sympathetic and tragic protagonist who, despite her weakness for alcohol, remains devoted to her husband. Although Chikamatsu's contemporary-life plays generally deal with the lives of urban commoners, this one describes the lives of the samurai, who normally were depicted in history plays, and ends with a vendetta (*katakiuchi*), which was standard fare for such history plays.

Adultery was a serious crime in samurai society, and the Tokugawa military government made every effort to maintain the special authority of the warrior class. Family succession was decided through the male line, from father to eldest son, and because adultery jeopardized the authority of the family head, it was severely punished, with the samurai husband given the right to kill his wife and carry out a vendetta on the male adulterer. In this play, adultery takes the role that economic disaster (theft, embezzlement, and the like) does in Chikamatsu's *chōnin* (urban commoner) plays. Significantly, the three adultery plays written by Chikamatsu—*Gonza the Lancer* (*Yari no Gonza*, 1717), *The Drum of the Waves of Horikawa*, and *The Calendar Maker* (*Daikyōji mukashi goyomi*)—all concern privileged classes, particularly the samurai.

Some scholars have treated *Horikawa* as a samurai play because of the class of the protagonists. In contrast to samurai history plays, which uphold *giri* (duty/principle) over *ninjō* (emotion) at tragic human cost, the contemporary-life plays deal with the weakness of the individual for *ninjō*, with the ascendancy of *ninjō* over *giri* leading to tragic circumstances. Interestingly, *Horikawa* combines both dynamics, of succumbing to *ninjō* and upholding *giri*: Otane fails to maintain her obligations to her husband but commits suicide as a sign of her continued devotion to him, and Hikokurō puts aside his feelings for Otane to carry out his duty as a samurai in slaying the drum teacher. Significantly, the tragedy is almost as much on the side of the husband as the wife, with the end of the second act an implicit commentary on the harshness of samurai law.

Horikawa is of considerable interest for its exploration of female sexuality and its

implicit critique of the life of lower-level samurai, who were separated from their wives for extremely long periods of time. The first act suggests—especially through its allusions to *nō* plays, particularly *Wind in the Pines* (*Matsukaze*)—a world of dream and illusion, a nightmare world of desire and intoxication. The second act takes place in the daytime and is a sober samurai view of public law in which crimes of passion are punished by death. The third act, which occurs during the Gion Festival, a time of daytime intoxication, echoes the first act but focuses on violence rather than sexuality. In the third act, which has been omitted here, Hikokurō and his entire family single-mindedly hunt down the drum teacher in Kyoto and kill him.

The interest that this play has had for modern readers is reflected in the production of the postwar film *Night Drum* (*Yoru no tsuzumi*), directed by Imai Tadashi and based on this play.

CHARACTERS

[OGURA] HIKOKURŌ, a samurai of low status in Inaba Province
(present-day Tottori Prefecture)

[MIYAJI] GEN'EMON, a drum teacher from Kyoto

BUNROKU, Hikokurō's adopted son

[ISOBE] YUKAEMON, a samurai attracted to Otane

OTANE, wife of Hikokurō and daughter of Naruyama Chūdayū

OFUJI, younger sister of Otane in the service of a samurai mansion

YURA, younger sister of Hikokurō and wife of a samurai (Masayama Sangohei)

ORIN, Otane's maid

Act 1

Scene 1: The courtyard of a house in Tottori, the seat of the daimyō of Inaba. The house belongs to Chūdayū, the father of Otane and Ofuji. The sisters are hanging out the laundry while a lesson in the music of the nō play Matsukaze is being taught inside the house.

CHANTER (*chants in nō style*):

And so three years of weary exile
Yukihira whiled away aboard his boat,
His heart illumined by the moon of Suma Bay.
He chose two sisters as his maids in waiting,

Fishergirls who dipped the evening tide,
And named one Pine-Breeze and one Spring-Shower,²⁵
Names he thought well suited to the time of year.
The sisters changed the clothes they wore,
Fishergirls of Suma, familiars of the moon,
When burning salt along the shore,
For robes of damask burned with faint perfumes.

Those were fishergirls' clothes, but here a matron is fulling her robes, her occupation during her husband's absence, in service at Edo. Her younger sister Ofuji fortunately happens to be at home today and offers to help, tying back her sleeves with a cotton cord. The sisters apply starch and wring out the clothes with dripping sleeves, so lovely a sight, it is clear why their charms are celebrated throughout the fief.

[OTANE]: It'd be best for you, Ofuji, to stay in service permanently. Remember always to keep your master pleased, and don't get married. I know that only too well from my own experience. Hikokurō and I were childhood sweethearts before our marriage, and I can't tell you how happy I was to become his bride. But it's hard being of low rank. Every other year Hikokurō must spend in Edo. Even when he's here, he must report every day at the castle, and ten nights each month it's his turn to stand guard duty. We've never spent a single relaxed night in conversation together like other couples. Hikokurō has the samurai spirit, and he encourages me by saying that unless he exerts himself as he does he'll never be able to make his mark in his profession. All the same, I can just see the expression on his face when he left for Edo last July. "I won't be seeing you again till I come back with his lordship next July," he said. "Take care of yourself and watch after the house." Yes, I've never for a moment forgotten that look. It's as if I could see him now before my eyes. I wait here as though we were lovers who met every day, wondering when, when he'll return.

CHANTER: She stretches the silk with clothespins and ties it with cords to the pines; talking in this way has helped relieve her grief.²⁶ Her sister Ofuji bursts out laughing.

[OFUJI]: You're asking for too much, Otane! Look at the marvelous powers of endurance I have, with no husband whatsoever! And

they're so strict about discipline at his lordship's mansion. It's forbidden for me to spend one single night away, even here, in my own family's house. I'm sure you'd die in such a place! Anyone hearing you complain would laugh!

[OTANE]: Listen—there's drum practice going on inside. You mustn't talk so loud. Hush!

CHANTER: She stretches the cloth on the clothesline and peers through a crack in the fence. Vague yearnings for her husband are stirred by the beat of the drum. As she hangs his robes on the pine to dry, the piece ends with a final cry.

(*Chants*) "This keepsake
Now is my enemy.
Without it
There might be a chance to forget."
The poet was right—
Keepsakes only deepen one's longing.²⁷

[OTANE]: Oh I'm so happy! Look, my husband's returned! I must go welcome him!

CHANTER: She runs up to the tree.

[OFUJI]: Are you out of your mind, Otane? That's just a garden pine tree. Hikokurō's in Edo. Are you mad?

CHANTER: She reproaches her sister.

[OTANE]: Silly Ofuji! What makes you think I'm mad? The only solace for my boredom while Hikokurō's away is to pretend he's returned. Here we are in Inaba, just as in that piece they're playing. Listen to the words—"When I hear you're waiting, I'll come back again." Oh, that song and the beat of the drum give me hope again!

CHANTER (*chants*):

His song fills me with hope—
"Though I leave now I will return



Otane, in work gear, hanging out the laundry. (Photograph courtesy of Barbara Curtis Adachi Collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University)

If I hear you pine like the pines
 Growing on Inaba Mountain's peak."²⁸
 He spoke of the pines of far-off Inaba,
 But these are the pines of Suma's curving bay
 Where once he lived, that dear prince.
 If Yukihiro returns, I will approach
 The shade of that pine tree, tenderly.
 Oh, that familiar pine on the beach, I love it!
 The wind blows wild in the pines.
 Now, when her loneliness is most intense
 For the husband who is far away,
 The drum has comforted her heart:
 The drum brings rumors that her husband
 Will presently return from the East.
 The wind is cool as she washes and stretches
 The thin raw silk of her husband's *hakama*;²⁹
 The mild spring sun will dry it soon.

[OTANE]: I'm glad I've done something useful. And now I shall wait

for my husband's return from Edo and listen to the wind in the pines.

CHANTER: She speaks in high spirits. Bunroku calls from inside.

[BUNROKU]: Mother! I've finished my drum practice. I'm sure you've heard me talk about my teacher, Miyaji Gen'emon. Wouldn't you like to come in and meet him?

[OTANE]: I would indeed. I was thinking of it a while ago, but I was so busy hanging up the clothes that the time went by before I knew it.

CHANTER: She unties the cords tucking up her sleeves and smooths her clothes. When she enters the sitting room, Gen'emon at once changes to a formal sitting posture.

[GEN'EMON]: I live in Kyoto, at Horikawa near Shimotachiuri. I have the honor to teach the drum to the gentlemen of this fief, and I come here quite frequently now that my pupils are about to be permitted to serve in the palace. Sometimes I stay for three or four months or even a whole year at a time, but I have never had the pleasure of meeting your husband, Hikokurō. Recently your son Bunroku expressed a desire to learn the drum, and I agreed to take him as my pupil. He's quite exceptionally talented, and I can imagine how proud of him his mother must be.

CHANTER: He speaks very politely. Otane acknowledges his compliments with a bow of the head and a smile.

[OTANE]: Calling me Bunroku's mother makes Hikokurō and myself sound like old people. Actually, Bunroku is my younger brother. My husband adopted him as his son. We're people of very modest means, and for the time being we've put Bunroku under the protection of a certain gentleman in his lordship's household. His grandfather was anxious for Bunroku to learn—with your kind help—at least one drum piece well enough to appear personally before his lordship. That was why he decided, even though my husband's away, to ask you to teach him. I expect my husband to be returning with his lordship in July, and I'll be very grateful if Bunroku is able to perform a piece for his father then.

CHANTER: She has a graceful manner of receiving him. So gentle yet dignified are her appearance and actions that no one would object if she were introduced as the greatest lady of Kyoto. Who could guess that she was reared in the mountains of Inaba? Ofuji

enters.

[OFUJI]: I'm Ofuji, Otane's younger sister. I'm in service in one of the households of the fief. Your kindness to Bunroku is very gratifying to us all. My sister's husband is away, and he draws only a small stipend. His house is so cramped that we must do the wash and everything else here, at my father's place. That's why we even have to ask you to give Bunroku his drum practice here, though I can imagine how inconvenient everything must be. I'm sure that Hikokurō will invite you to his house as soon as he returns. (*To maid*) Bring some saké cups, please. (*Calls*) Father, are you at home? (*To Gen'emon*) We've just the one maid, fresh out of the country, and even with only a single guest everything is in complete chaos, as you can see. (*Laughs*) Really, it's quite embarrassing.

CHANTER: She bows in greeting. Her eyes are as lovely as Otane's.

[GEN'EMON]: Please don't go to any trouble on my account.

CHANTER: But even while they exchange these compliments, the maid, realizing what is needed, brings saké and relishes.

[OTANE]: Oh, what a good idea! (*To Gen'emon*) My father's only a rōnin, and we can't offer you anything to eat with the drinks, but have a cup—it'll cheer you.

[GEN'EMON]: I'm sure you must be busy, and I most appreciate your kindness. Please, you drink first.

[OTANE]: No, please, guests first. There's no need to stand on ceremony.

[GEN'EMON]: In that case, what about starting with Bunroku?

CHANTER: He offers the cup to Bunroku but tippler that she is, Otane's hand intercepts the cup.

[OTANE]: I'll play the part of a good mother and make sure first the saké's properly heated.

CHANTER: She accepts some sakeé and drains the cup. She offers it to Bunroku.³⁰

[BUNROKU]: I've never drunk any saké before.

CHANTER: He swallows a little.

[BUNROKU]: Excuse me, master, for drinking first.

CHANTER: He bows. Gen'emon politely accepts the cup. He comes from a family of heavy drinkers, and his lips smack like a drum.

[GEN'EMON]: Ahhh, what marvelous saké! I don't drink very much as

a rule, but I like a little saké now and then, and I've tried it all over the country. But not even the Kyoto saké can touch this. It has a good color, a fine bouquet, and the taste is excellent. I'm quite impressed by your husband's palate!

CHANTER: His praise of the saké and his company manners are a trifle too glib; how unfortunate that nobody recognizes this portent of later calamity!

[GEN'EMON]: Here, I'm returning the cup immediately to Bunroku.

[OTANE]: Let me, his mother, intervene here, and keep you company in drink!

CHANTER: She accepts some saké and again empties the cup.

[OTANE]: Please show you like the saké by having another drink.

CHANTER: He takes the cup from her hand without even letting her put it down.

[GEN'EMON]: I'll be delighted, of course.



Bunroku (*left*) and Gen'emon, the drum teacher, drinking saké. (Photograph courtesy of Barbara Curtis Adachi Collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University)

CHANTER: He accepts the brimming cupful and swallows it in one gulp. He returns the cup to Bunroku, who again merely touches it

to his lips.

[BUNROKU]: Excuse me, but I'd like to offer my aunt some saké.

CHANTER: He is about to hand Ofuji the cup.

[OTANE]: You can't be so unsociable, no matter how unaccustomed you may be to drinking. Here, have a cup. I'll keep you company.

CHANTER: She lifts the flowing cup and empties it.

[OTANE]: It's a happy occasion when a mother drinks with her child. To make it all the happier, let's have an extra drink now for your father in Edo. Here, please join us.

CHANTER: She offers the cup once again to Gen'emon.

[GEN'EMON]: I see, madam, that you're partial to a little saké. Excuse my familiarity, but I'd like to see what kind of a drinker you are!

CHANTER: He returns the cup. Ofuji is dismayed.

[OFUJI]: No, Otane can't drink so much. Lately especially she's been under the weather and hasn't been feeling too well. Otane, I think you've had enough.

CHANTER: She stands beside Otane and tries to restrain her, but Otane, drinker that she is, becomes obstinate.

[OTANE]: What are you trying to tell me? We have nothing to eat with the sake, so the best entertainment I can offer our guest is to drink with him.

CHANTER: She speaks in haughty tones. Another bottle is brought from the kitchen. Her guest, beating a drum accompaniment with his hands, sings out.

[GEN'EMON]: Well, then, another for me too.

CHANTER: They pass the saké back and forth. Here indeed is a splendid (*chants*) gathering of champions, a drinking party of bosom friends.³¹

They tilt their cups a number of times, and soon the sun is slanting in the evening sky. A servant comes from the mansion where Ofuji serves.

[SERVANT]: Miss Ofuji, I've come to escort you back. Please return with me. The gate will be closing soon.

[OFUJI]: Oh, is that you, Kakuzō? Sorry to have bothered you. Otane, I'll be leaving now. I must apologize to you, sir, for my rudeness, but a woman in service can't do as she pleases. I hope to see you again.

CHANTER: She takes her leave with these words and departs.

Bunroku quietly speaks.

[BUNROKU]: I think I'll be going too. Tonight they're expecting guests at the house of the gentleman I wait on. Master, would you kindly remain here a bit longer, until my grandfather returns?

[GEN'EMON]: Well, if you say so. But how will it look if I'm found here with your mother, just the two of us? I'll go to the next room.

CHANTER: He leaves his seat in some embarrassment. Otane shows Bunroku to the door.

[OTANE]: Please stop by our house for a minute and ask your grandfather to return. I'm anxious to go home. Ask him to send Rin to fetch me.

[BUNROKU]: Yes, I will.

CHANTER: He departs for his master's house. This is the hour when gates are shut, here on the outskirts of town. The youthful mistress of the house, whose husband has been away for many months in Edo, is a trifle too fond of liquor—she thinks it will bolster her spirits. Her face has not lost its composure, but it is burning hot. In the mirror, when she combs her hair and strokes her heavy head, an indefinable seductiveness glows in her reflection. Tonight she seems to be awaiting her husband.

Isobe Yukaemon, though a fellow retainer of the same fief, was excused from accompanying his lordship to Edo, and remained in the country, claiming to be sick. Now he suddenly bursts into the house through the side door, all alone, without even a servant.

[YUKAEMON]: I've come to see how you're getting along.

CHANTER: Otane pushes away her mirror in alarm.

[OTANE]: Chūdayū isn't here. He's been out ever since morning.

[CHANTER]: She intends these words as a dismissal and starts to withdraw inside when Yukaemon catches her in his arms.

[YUKAEMON]: I knew he was out. That's why I came. I haven't any business with your father. It's you I've been longing to see. I've felt like a boat, trapped by the shoals of other people's eyes, with the breakers pounding in on me.³² I knew for a fact that if I spent this year serving in Edo, my stipend would be increased, but I gave up all thoughts of advancement as a samurai. I pretended to be sick, and I begged permission to remain here in the country. I want you to know that it's all been on account of you. My sickness

was a ruse and yet not entirely so—I was suffering from the malady called love, and you were the cause, Otane. Please, I beg you, give me just one small dose of the medicine of your love. I implore you.

CHANTER: He holds her tightly in his arms. Otane is a little drunk from the saké.

[OTANE]: Stop it! You're acting outrageously. Leave me alone!

CHANTER: She shakes him off and gets away from him, but her hair bristles in terror, and she is trembling all over.

[OTANE]: Dog of a samurai! To think you're a close friend of Hikokurō! It goes against all the rules of human decency. The whole fief will point at you with scorn, and if his lordship hears about it, you'll be ruined. Don't you realize that? I'm Ogura Hikokurō's wife, a samurai wife! Don't do anything contemptible that will only make you hate me later on. I won't tell anyone what has happened. Now leave!

CHANTER: She forces out the words.

[YUKAEMON]: I've thought about how people would criticize me and the disgrace I would suffer. I've taken all that into account. I came here resolved that if by any chance you refused me, I would stab you first and then myself. Rumors would soon be flying throughout the province that we'd committed a lovers' suicide, the kind so popular in Osaka, and we would share a common disgrace.

CHANTER: He draws his sword and catches her by the front of the kimono.

[YUKAEMON]: What is your answer to that?

CHANTER: He threatens her. Otane supposes in her woman's heart that he speaks the truth, and she is mortified to think that she may die like a dog and be branded for a crime of which she is blameless. She decides that she will trick him.

[OTANE]: Are you really in love with me as you say?

[YUKAEMON]: If I'm not telling the truth, may I be dismissed by his lordship and have my head cut off by a common soldier!

[OTANE]: You delight me. Why should I treat you unkindly? But this is my father's house. Just supposing he were to return now! What would we do then? If you will come secretly to my house tomorrow night, I'll throw off my reserve and chase away all your cares.

CHANTER: She taps him gently, with artful deceit. The ignorant, illiterate Yukaemon is tricked by one word and turns sentimental.

[YUKAEMON]: Oh, I'm so grateful for your kindness! I know that it's shameless to ask anything more, but I'd much rather if now, here, we might just—

CHANTER: He clutches her.

[OTANE]: You're unreasonable!

CHANTER: She runs from place to place trying to get away from him. On the other side of the partition Gen'emon beats his drum and raises his voice.

[GEN'EMON] (*chants*):

The evil demon of lust
Will attack and attack your flesh.
Your beloved one will appear
Over the Mountain of Swords.
You'll cry in delight
And grope your way up,
Only for swords to pierce your flesh
And great rocks crush your bones.

What does this mean? What horror is this?³³

[OTANE]: Somebody's heard! What am I to do?

CHANTER: She is terrified. [YUKAEMON]: Everything I've been saying has all been a joke—not a word of truth in it.

CHANTER: With these parting words he dashes out and makes his escape. Otane, poor creature, is distraught with shame. Undoubtedly her guest from Kyoto has overheard the conversation without realizing that it was all a trick. Now he will despise her in his heart, and more than that, being a man with a wide acquaintance throughout the fief, he will soon spread the scandal. Then what will she do? Unable to control the agitation in her breast, she rouses the maid and orders her to heat some saké.

[OTANE]: You can shut the front gate while you're at it. It's time you went to bed.

CHANTER: She pours some saké and, drinking alone, forgets her grief and bitterness. The one thing she cannot forget is her husband in Edo. Her tears make the moonlight seem the mistier as it bathes the veranda where footsteps now are heard.

[OTANE]: Oh, it's you, Gen'emon.—Where are you going, sir?

[GEN'EMON]: I feel rather awkward being here in a house with only women. I'm leaving.

CHANTER: He starts to go, but she catches his sleeve.

[OTANE]: Did you hear what happened just now? It was a perfect disgrace, a horrible experience. I'm sure you don't suppose for a moment that a woman with a husband like Hikokurō could actually have meant what I said. I talked to him that way only to deceive him, so that I might escape my predicament. Please don't tell anyone. I beg you most earnestly.

CHANTER: She joins her hands in supplication and weeps. Gen'emon is at a loss for words.

[GEN'EMON]: I wasn't listening—or not listening, for that matter. The conversation was exceedingly unpleasant for an outsider to overhear. I sang that piece to distract myself. What happened seems trivial enough, though it's quite a serious matter. I don't intend to tell anyone, but as they say, you can hide a gimlet in a bag but it'll soon show itself. I don't know what rumors other people may start.

CHANTER: He shakes himself loose, but she clings to him again.

[OTANE]: What a cruel thing to say! You are a young man and I am a young woman—even if what you heard was really true, it would be normal human kindness to hide it as best you could. I won't have any peace of mind if I let you go as things stand. Please exchange a cup with me as a promise that you won't tell.

CHANTER: She takes the sake jar and fills a large tea bowl to the brim. She empties the cup and, filling it again, drinks half, then offers the rest to him.

[GEN'EMON] (*to himself*): This is very strange, giving me the remains of the cup she drank from.

CHANTER: He accepts it politely and drinks. Otane by now is quite intoxicated. She presses Gen'emon's hand tightly.

[OTANE]: Now that you've shared a cup of sake with a married woman, your guilt is the same as mine. You mustn't ever tell anything.

CHANTER: She forces him into a hopeless dilemma.

[GEN'EMON]: Damn it! What a mess to put a man in!

CHANTER: He rushes for the door, but she throws her arms around him.

[OTANE]: You don't know anything about love, do you? What an infuriating man you are!

CHANTER: Her arms still around him, she undoes his obi, undoing his heart as well, for his mind is befuddled with drink and desire. Embracing and embraced, their love has become real before they knew it.

[OTANE]: Now do you agree never to tell what happened?

[GEN'EMON]: I thought it didn't concern me, but now that I'm involved, how could I fail to hide what's happened?

CHANTER: He opens the *shōji*, and they go into the next room. They share momentary dreams on one pillow, the beginning of a short-lived union, an evil alliance, a connection doomed from the start.



Otane clinging to Gen'emon. (Photograph courtesy of Barbara Curtis Adachi Collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University)

Scene 2: Later that night.

CHANTER: The night is far advanced. Otane's father, Naruyama Chūdayū, returns alone, without a servant, and bangs furiously at the gate.³⁴ Otane, sober now, is awakened by the noise. She

looks at herself. Her sash is undone, and the bed where she slept with a man is disordered.

[OTANE]: Good heavens! How unspeakable! I remember now deliberately enticing him, hoping to stop him from telling about Yukaemon's advances. Yes, I remember that. But afterward—I was so drunk I can't be sure what was only a dream and what really happened. My sister always warned me about my drinking, but I wouldn't listen to her. Now I have disgraced myself by touching another man's body—a perfect stranger! How depraved of me! I'm guilty of the worst sin a woman can commit, and I'll suffer for it, not only the torments of hell, but dishonor in this life. What shall I do, now that I've destroyed the reputations of even my father and brother? I feel utterly wretched. If only this would turn out to be a dream!

CHANTER: She chokes in tears. Gen'emon, wakened by the sound of her sobbing, rises from bed. Drunkenness had so stupefied him, too, that he violated the code of a man of honor. Their eyes meet for an instant, then they look down in tears and embarrassment, ashamed to stand before each other. Chūdayū, his patience exhausted, pounds all the more violently at the gate.

[OTANE]: If my father discovers me, I'll have to kill myself. What am I to do?

CHANTER: She wanders around the room looking for somewhere to hide. By mischance she stumbles onto the sleeping place of the maid, who jumps up, stark naked.

[MAID]: Something awful's happened! A burglar's crawled into my bosom while I was sleeping, and now he's ravaging my snow white skin!

CHANTER: Carried away by her own shrieks and gyrations, she kicks over the standing lantern. "The darkness of the ways of love" they sing about—how could it be compared to this? Delusion springs even from inconsequential acts. At the gate someone shouts insistently, "Open up! Open up!" and pounds. Otane and the man, trembling with fear, whisper a plan: with her hand held behind her, she pulls his sleeve, shielding him with her body. She unfastens the latch and calls, "Is that you, Father?" But it is not her father. Yukaemon, his face averted, stretches out his hands, and tightly clasps their sleeves together.

[YUKAEMON]: Now, you adulteress, I've got proof of your crime!

CHANTER: At his shout, she slams the gate shut with a cry of dismay, but Yukaemon does not let the sleeves out of his grasp. Gen'emon, in desperation, unsheathes the dagger at his side, and slits off the ends of the sleeves. Opening a side door, he flees precipitously for home. Yukaemon stuffs the sleeves into the fold of his kimono. He forces his way in through the gate.

[YUKAEMON]: Well, madam, you've been unkind! Why were you so cold to me when you let someone else untie your girdle strings? If you want me to keep this a secret, I expect you'll show me some love tonight in return.

CHANTER: In the darkness he gropes for Otane, his arms spread wide, an object inspiring terror. As he wanders here and there, he bumps into the naked maid.

[YUKAEMON]: Now I have you! So this is where you were!

CHANTER: He throws his arms around her. The maid, knowing her way even in the dark, slips off to her bed.

[YUKAEMON]: This is wonderful! Thank you!

CHANTER: He pulls the bedclothes over him and flops down beside her. The maid dislikes his advances, and as she is fending him off, a voice calls from outside.

[SERVANT]: It's Rin. I've come to take Madam Otane home.

CHANTER: She enters with a lighted lantern. Yukaemon carefully examines the face caught in the light and sees that it is the maid.

[YUKAEMON]: How demeaning, and how disgusting! I was about to break my fast to eat a sardine!³⁵

CHANTER: Without so much as looking back, he runs outside. The illusion in the dark was lovely.

Act 2

Scene 1: Four months later, on the road from Edo to Tottori.

CHANTER (*song*):

“See the splendid horse
With a daimyō's wicker trunk,
Seven layers of cushions
And a riding seat above.
First we'll lay the cushions on,

Then we'll put the young lord on top."

This is the song the drivers cheerfully hum, leading their horses the hundred leagues of the Tōkaidō. The cherries are in blossom, and the soldiers in the van of the brilliant procession carry lances—plain, single-pronged, and cross-pointed; their helmets sport crimson-dyed yak tails from China; their robes are magenta; and the fish that they eat is sea bream.³⁶ Needless to say, these lancers are samurai. The lackeys carry spears with sheaths cylindrical as the bowls from which they drank their saké this morning, or round as a girl's braided head,³⁷ shaking, shaking, shaking white snow over Fuji and Asama that they now leave behind. The road is as long as the shafts of their many lances; the sheaths are festooned with rooster plumes.³⁸ Men lead Mochizuki horses famous west of the Barrier.³⁹ The horses' bits jingle, jingle, jangle, and now there come riding on pack steeds to the beat of the same rhythm the night guards,⁴⁰ the inspectors, the samurai commanders, and the master of ceremonies. Streams of pennants flap on their staffs before and behind the chief of the ensigns. The world is at peace; the waves are calm in the seas all around; the wind in the sky has abated.

"—Look, there by the halberds you can see the doctors and philosophers!" Everybody, pundit and ignoramus alike, gapes at the endless procession of tent pegs, lacquered boxes on poles, rattan-wound bows and black-varnished bows, in numbers beyond reckoning, unpainted bows and half-blackened bows, quivers, arrow cases and arrow holders, cases of the commander's armor covered with double lids, and stands for his helmets.

It seems just yesterday they took the road to the East, but more than a year has passed since they left their province. All has gone smoothly; they have safely returned with the Seven Ceremonial Articles:⁴¹ a wicker hat borne aloft on a pole, a long-handled umbrella in its case, an emblem to mark the general's horse (a ball of falcon feathers, true to the name of the clan, Tottori).⁴² The horse the daimyō rides and the spare horse, too, neigh in high spirits at the northern wind of their native heaths. The rear of the procession is brought up by a pair of lancers.

His lordship has been away from his province for a long time, and his return brings joy to his deputy. When a prince acts in

princely fashion, his subjects will be true subjects. New casks of sake are opened, and singing greets his lordship as he enters his province, where not even needles from the beach pines scatter,⁴³ in a land that will last ten thousand generations, a land that will last forever.

Men of the household, high and low alike, meet again their parents, wives, and children after a year's separation, and the happy tidings fly here and there. For everyone, down to the lowliest spear carriers, lackeys, and menials, this is a time of exchanging presents and souvenirs and of noisy celebration.

Among those returning is Ogura Hikokurō. At the moment of the departure from Edo, he was singled out for his service and achievements of the past few years and granted a special increase in stipend as well as a larger retinue of attendants and grooms. He and his family—his son Bunroku, Otane, and Ofuji—are overjoyed to be together again.

Masayama Sangohei, the daimyō's equerry and husband of Hikokurō's sister, is another in the returning party. He has sent a messenger to Otane.

Scene 2: Hikokuro's house.

[MESSENGER] (*speaking for Sangohei*): I am sure you must be delighted to see your husband again after the long separation and to learn that he has safely escorted his lordship here. I share these feelings. I had planned to offer you a souvenir from Edo, but nothing struck me as really unusual. For want of anything better, I am sending with this messenger some hemp thread.⁴⁴ It's a specialty of Edo—they call it Kantō hemp. I realize that it is not much of a gift, but while we were on the road, a rumor spread among his lordship's staff that during his absence you had taken to spinning hemp thread. I find now that I'm back that the rumor is in circulation here too. I am therefore taking the liberty of offering you this humble present.

CHANTER: Hardly has he finished speaking than other messengers arrive.

[MAN A]: Who sent you with this present?

[MAN B]: It's from a Mr. Something-or-other, a souvenir for Madam Otane.

CHANTER: Each present arriving strikes terror into Otane's heart. She wonders whether her husband too may not have heard the rumors, but looking at his face, she can detect no sign of suspicion.

[HIKOKURŌ]: Please help unpack the baggage. We must choose suitable presents for everybody and distribute them accordingly. Oh, I forgot—I should go immediately to pay my respects to my father-in-law. Bring me my *hakama*.

CHANTER: His wife answers yes and at once goes inside. Her sister Ofuji brushes past entering the room. Ofuji catches Hikokurō's sleeve.

[OFUJI]: You are certainly the most ungallant man. Why didn't you ever answer the two letters I sent you in Edo? Here, I've thought over everything very carefully, and I've written down exactly what I feel in this letter. I ask you please to take some notice of the contents, whether or not you welcome them.

CHANTER: She pushes a sealed letter into the fold of her brother-in-law's kimono. Hikokurō recoils with an expression of distaste.

[HIKOKURŌ]: Have you gone out of your mind? Yes, I know, when I was first considering marriage to your sister there was some talk of marrying you instead, but nothing ever came of it, and your sister and I are now husband and wife. All that took place more than ten years ago, and we're now rearing a son. I can't possibly divorce Otane to marry you, no matter how much you may care for me. I refuse even to hold such a letter in my hand.

CHANTER: He throws down the letter and goes to the gate. Otane, observing from the inside room what has happened, boldly marches out, snatches up the letter, and thrusts it into her kimono.

[OFUJI]: Wait! That letter is very important. I don't want anybody else to see it.

CHANTER: Ofuji clings fast to her sister, but Otane kicks her fiercely to the ground. She picks up a palm-leaf broom and hits her sister until Ofuji's shrieks of pain bring Bunroku and the maids running up.



Ofuji catching Hikokurō's sleeve. (Photograph courtesy of Barbara Curtis Adachi Collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University)

[BUNROKU]: I don't know what this is about, but please excuse me.

CHANTER: He grasps Otane's arm and wrenches away the broom.

Otane snatches up a horsewhip tied to the baggage and lashes

Ofuji again and again, as if determined to split her head and face.

Ofuji's voice rises in a howl of pain.

[OFUJI]: You're hurting me! You'll kill me! Help! CHANTER: She screams, in tears. Bunroku grabs the whip.

[BUNROKU]: Mother, I don't understand what's going on. If you have a quarrel with Aunt Ofuji, please let it be with words. She may lose consciousness if you continue beating her like that. Then what will be your excuse?

CHANTER: He speaks harshly.

[OTANE]: I don't care if I kill her. I've heard her say that she was in love with her sister's husband. She admitted sending him letters to Edo. Here, look what I've found.

CHANTER: She tears open the seal and unfolds the letter.

[OTANE]: Do you still think I'm lying? Or do you think it doesn't matter even if it's the truth? Here is what she writes in her letter: "Divorce

my sister. Send her away and then we'll be married!" Look! She's even torn off her fingernail to the quick and enclosed it in the letter!⁴⁵ Read it for yourself, and see whether or not I'm making it up. How I loathe her! She makes me furious!

CHANTER: She flies at her sister. Seizing her hair, she twists it round and round in her hands, and pins the tresses under her knee.

[OTANE]: You hateful woman! I've been waiting for my husband for an eternity, the whole year he's been away, counting the months, watching the stars—my husband, my childhood sweetheart, for whom I wouldn't change my parents or a child. At last this morning I saw his face, and just when I was rejoicing that we'd be sleeping together until next year, you had the nerve to order him to send me away! You animal! It infuriates me to let you live!

CHANTER: Otane hits Ofuji, not caring whether her blows land on her sister's eyes or nose.

[OFUJI]: I have all the excuses in the world. Please, everybody, take her off me. I'm at my last gasp.

[BUNROKU]: First let's hear your excuses.

CHANTER: He restrains Otane forcibly.

[OTANE]: If your excuses aren't believable this time, I'll kill you. Let's hear them, if you have any.

CHANTER: She pulls Ofuji to her feet and pushes her away with understandable distaste. Her sister, breathing painfully, smooths her hair, holding back her tears.

[OFUJI]: I can reveal my reasons, Otane, only when the two of us are alone together. Please leave the room, everybody.

CHANTER: At her request, all the others rise and withdraw.

[OTANE]: Now, no more innuendos—come out with your reasons plainly.

CHANTER: Ofuji sheds copious tears.

[OFUJI]: Otane. It was out of sisterly duty that I sent the letter to Hikokurō asking him to divorce you. I wanted to save your life. I'm sure you know what I mean without my having to say it. You've been rather friendly with that drum teacher Gen'emon, haven't you?

CHANTER: Otane flies at Ofuji and covers her mouth.

[OTANE]: Be still! You speak so casually, but it's no laughing matter. What have you seen that makes you say such a thing? Show me

your proof!

[OFUJI]: I don't need any proof. You're four months pregnant. Whose child is it? And who's been taking that abortion medicine that your maid Orin's bought for you? You never guessed anybody knew, but the whole fief is gossiping about nothing else. I saw a minute ago how all those people brought you the same souvenir from Edo—hemp thread! I knew that they'd be coming to Hikokurō to tell him what was going on, to call his attention, as his friends, to the situation. You and you alone are responsible for destroying your family's honor and your husband's reputation as a samurai.

CHANTER: She weeps aloud. Otane is at a loss for words.

[OTANE]: I never listened when you urged me not to drink. The liquor was my enemy.

CHANTER: These are her only words; she can do nothing now but weep. Ofuji brushes away the welling tears.

[OFUJI]: Your repentance comes months too late. Now you know what I was worrying about. You are disgraced beyond redemption. I've wanted at least to save your life, and I've considered every possible scheme. I thought that if I could persuade Hikokurō to break with you and give you divorce papers, you could give birth to your baby in the middle of a public highway, and it still wouldn't be a crime. You couldn't be killed for it. So I tried, in my poor, feminine way, to help you. I made advances to my brother-in-law and acted like a loose woman. It wasn't only out of sisterly duty to you, however. I thought it was my duty to Mother. Poor Mother! I'm sure you can't have forgotten her last instructions when, just two days before she died, she called us to her pillow, one on either side. "I've taught you, ever since you were children, the proper conduct for women. You've learned to read, to sew, to spin thread and to stretch cotton wool.⁴⁶ Any girl who knows that much has nothing to be ashamed of. But the most important test of a woman's training comes after she's married. You must treat your parents-in-law with the same devotion you have shown to your own parents and your husband's brothers and sisters as if they were your own. When you are alone together with any other man, you are not so much as to lift your head and look at him. It doesn't matter who the man may be—a servant, a member of the household, a stranger, an old man, or a boy—

when your husband's away, you must observe the proprieties. A woman who's doesn't do this may know the Four Books and the Five Classics by heart, but she won't be of any use to anybody. Remember your mother's dying words. Let them be your *Analects* and never forget them."

Those words have sunk into my bones and are engraved on my heart. I can't forget them. Then Mother went on, this time speaking to me, "Your sister has inherited her father's disposition. She's enjoyed drinking ever since she was in pinafores. Ofuji, you must act as her mother and reprimand her in my place." These were her last words. Every day, morning and night, I repeat those last instructions before her memorial tablet, just as if they were holy writing. Have you forgotten them so quickly? To think that you would want to bring grief to your sister in this world and suffering on Mother's dead body in the world of the hereafter!

CHANTER: She utters words of bitter reproach and weeps aloud in her misery. Otane is speechless, choked by tears.

[OTANE]: I see now that the saké I enjoyed so much was a poisonous brew compounded of the sins of a previous existence. As soon as my drunkenness from the liquor had worn off, I decided to kill myself, but I wanted so badly to see my husband's face once again that I kept putting off my suicide from one day to the next. And now I have exposed my shame to the world. I wonder if I have been bewitched by some horrible demon.

CHANTER: At these repeated words of vain regret, the sisters, embracing, weep aloud with unrestrained voices, a pitiful sight in their utter helplessness. Just then a loud uproar is heard by the gate.

[OTANE]: It must be a fight. Let's leave for a while until it quiets down.

CHANTER: After they depart, Hikokurō's sister Yura enters, pursuing her brother with an outstretched lance.

[YURA]: I know I'm only your younger sister, Hikokurō, but I'm the wife of a samurai, Masayama Sangohei. Something has happened that goes against all decency, and I won't tolerate it, even though it involves my own brother. What do you say to that?

CHANTER: Hikokurō glares at her.

[HIKOKURŌ]: You impudent little hussy! What nerve you have to talk

to me, your older brother, about decency or indecency! This is the height of impertinence! Out with your accusations! Out with them, or I'll twist your arms and that lance of yours, and break them both together!

CHANTER: The words are spoken in fury. Yura laughs at him mockingly.

[YURA]: Admirably said, Mr. Weak-Kneed! I'll tell you what's happened. Your wife has had a secret affair with Miyaji Gen'emon, a drum teacher from Kyoto, and the whole fief is buzzing with it now. That's why everybody gave her souvenirs of hemp thread—to call your attention to what was going on. But you pretend not to have heard anything because you're unable to avenge yourself on your wife's lover. My husband has ordered me out of his house. He said he couldn't go on living with the sister of Weak-Kneed Hikokurō. "You can return," he told me, "when your brother shows a little backbone. Then, and only then, will we be husband and wife again." We're separated now, and I've come to you. Well, my weak-kneed brother, are you going to reunite me with my husband or aren't you? It's up to you.

CHANTER: She holds out the lance and brandishes it, seemingly ready to run him through if he flinches. Hikokurō claps his hands in amazement.

[HIKOKURŌ]: This is incredible—I suspected nothing! I heard people talk about that Gen'emon, or whatever his name is, but I've never actually laid eyes on him. He's never set foot inside this house. What proof do you have?

[YURA]: Do you suppose that a man like Sangohei would make accusations without evidence? Your friend Isobe Yukaemon, suspecting that something was going on, used to come here, pretending it was merely to visit. He caught them one night in a secret rendezvous and cut off their sleeves. The affair has become a public scandal throughout the fief. It's impossible to hide it any longer, even with the best will in the world. But some things not even a close friend can tell a man to his face, so Yukaemon decided to tell my husband instead of going to you. Look!

CHANTER: She produces from her kimono the sleeves of the guilty pair, and throws them in front of Hikokurō.

[YURA]: Do you have any doubts now?

CHANTER: Her face is livid. Hikokurō picks up the sleeves and examines them.

[HIKOKURŌ]: I've never seen this man's sleeve before, but I remember the woman's sleeve very well. Yura, I promise you I shall lose no time in vindicating your honor. Come with me.

CHANTER: He leads her into the sitting room. Everyone in the house has heard their conversation, and a breathless silence has fallen. Hikokurō speaks quite calmly.

[HIKOKURŌ]: Otane, you and the other women come here. Bunroku, I want you too.

CHANTER: They all know that so curt a summons indicates some disaster. They slowly come before Hikokurō and bow their heads. Their bodies are chilled, their spirits faint, they can scarcely breathe. Among them, wretched creature, is Otane, fated on account of an evil deed, not of her intent or desire, yet blamable only on herself, to be impaled on a blade wielded by her husband, as she fully expects. All her long, patient waiting for her husband's return has been in vain. Never, until this very moment when she is about to be killed, did she imagine that the pillow she shared with her husband on the night before his departure in the previous year would be their last together. At this thought, she wants to look once more at her husband's face, but her eyes are too blinded with tears to see him. She weeps, her head hanging. Her husband throws the sleeves in front of her.

[HIKOKURŌ]: I'm sure you've all heard Yura's accusations. Well, woman, do you have an excuse? No? I didn't think so—you can't answer. Ofuji, I presume you know who brought them together. In crimes of immorality, the go-between shares the lovers' guilt.

[OFUJI]: You foolish man, Hikokurō! Had I known what was going on, do you suppose such a disgraceful thing would have happened?

CHANTER: She weeps bitterly again.

[HIKOKURŌ]: The servant must have been the go-between. Send for the wench.

CHANTER: At his summons the girl appears, trembling all over.

[ORIN]: Begging your pardon, sir, but I don't know anything about it. The other day Madam Otane asked me to buy some abortion medicine. She told me not to let anybody know. I bought three

doses at seven *fun* each, which made two *monme*, one *fun*, all together. That's all I ever did. Even so, I was afraid, master, if you heard about it you might scold me for buying such expensive medicine. So I paid for it with bad coins.⁴⁷

CHANTER: She prattles on in this inane fashion. Hikokurō is flabbergasted.

[HIKOKURŌ]: You say she's pregnant? Bunroku, I know you're still a boy, but why, when the whole fief's bursting with the scandal, didn't you kill Gen'emon and get rid of him long ago?

[BUNROKU]: I heard about it only this morning. I informed the household retainers, and they sent some men to Gen'emon's lodgings to kill him. But they discovered that he had gone back to Kyoto a couple of days ago.

[HIKOKURŌ]: It can't be helped, then. Somebody light a fire in front of the Buddhist altar. Stand up, woman. Come here before the altar.

CHANTER: His wife wipes away her tears.

[OTANE]: I expected you to hate me until the end of time. But I know now, when you tell me to stand before the Buddha, that something still remains of your old affection. How shall I forget it, even after death? My dear husband, I did not betray you intentionally, after knowing your goodness all those many months and years. My crime took place in a kind of nightmare. While I dreamed, a horrible man—but if I go on, it will only make my death mean and shameful. It may be wrong of me, I know, to kill myself before my husband's sword can strike, but let me vindicate myself in this way. Forgive me, please. This is my atonement.

CHANTER: She pulls open the front of her kimono and plunges the dagger to the hilt into her breast, a moving display of her resolve. Ofuji and Bunroku cry out in horror. The tears well in their hearts, but taken aback by Hikokuro's impassive expression, they clench their teeth in silent grief. Hikokurō unsheathes his sword and, jerking up Otane's body, deals her the death blow with a final thrust. He pushes away her body, wipes his sword, and deliberately sheathes it. He rises to his feet: this is the stern behavior expected of a samurai. Hikokurō picks up the traveling costume he had taken off only this morning—his wicker hat, straw sandals, and sword.

[HIKOKURŌ]: Bunroku, I'm going now to report to my superiors what

has happened. I shall ask for leave, even though I can't wait until it is granted. I intend to go as quickly as possible to Kyoto. While I am busy disposing of my wife's lover, I want you to escort these women to a safe place with our relatives.



Hikokurō dealing Otane the death blow. (Photograph courtesy of Barbara Curtis Adachi Collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University)

CHANTER: He starts to leave after these parting words. Ofuji, Bunroku, and Yura, all wishing to follow, vie in their eagerness to join him. Fury blazes in Hikokuro's dilated eyes.

[HIKOKURŌ]: Do you expect me to take along the lot of you just to kill one man, like some shopkeeper's vengeance? Are you trying to bring even more disgrace on me? If even one of you follows me, I'll never speak to you again.

CHANTER: He is outraged. The others burst into tears.

[OFUJI]: You are being too unkind. The man, as far as I am concerned, is my sister's enemy.

[BUNROKU]: For me, he's my mother's enemy.

[YURA]: And for me, my sister-in-law's enemy.

[ALL THREE]: Can we allow this villain to go unpunished? Please let us go with you.

CHANTER: The three together join their hands in supplication, weeping aloud. Hikokurō is unable to hide his grief any longer. His resolute expression gives way to despair.

[HIKOKURŌ]: If you think so much of your mother, sister, or sister-in-law, why didn't you beg me to spare her life? Why didn't you suggest that she put on Buddhist robes and become a nun?

CHANTER: Lifting the lifeless body in his arms, he shouts his grief, and the others are carried away by tears of sympathy. The misery of it! This is the heartbreaking conduct demanded of those born to be samurai.

[*Chikamatsu jōruri shū jō*, NKBT 49: 39–57, translated by Donald Keene]

***THE BATTLES OF COXINGA* (KOKUSENYA KASSEN, 1715)**

Although now the contemporary-life (*sewamono*) puppet plays are the main focus of critical attention and the more frequently performed, the history plays (*jidaimono*) were the more important in Chikamatsu's time. Chikamatsu himself wrote three times as many *jidaimono* as *sewamono*, and *The Battles of Coxinga*, which was first performed in 1715, was his greatest success in this genre. This was the first play that Chikamatsu wrote after the death in 1714 of Takemoto Gidayū, the chief chanter of the Takemoto Theater with whom he had first established himself as a playwright. Chikamatsu wrote *The Battles of Coxinga* to maintain the life of the theater and ensure the success of Gidayū's successor, Masatayū. The play became a long-running hit and was quickly adapted by the kabuki theater. Indeed, until well into the nineteenth century, *The Battles of Coxinga* was performed more often than any other Chikamatsu play. The exoticism of the drama, the setting in China, and the incorporation of a number of foreign details contributed to its popularity, as did the many special puppet effects. Even so, the play was not performed in its entirety for long. The tendency toward fragmentation has left only the second half of act 2 (Bamboo Forest of a Thousand Leagues) and the two scenes of act 3, translated here, in regular production on the puppet and kabuki stages.

The Battles of Coxinga follows the five-act structure that Gidayū had advocated for *jidaimono*: the first act (love), second act (warriors and battle), third act (tragedy), fourth act (*michiyuki*/poetic journey), and fifth act (celebratory speech). In act 1, the Ming emperor is duped by Ri Tōten, one of his ministers, who gouges out one of his own eyes in what appears to be a show of loyalty but turns out to be a sign that he has joined the Tartars (Manchus), who are plotting to overthrow the Ming court. Go Sankei, a minister loyal to the Ming emperor, points out Ri Tōten's deception as well as the plight of Ikkan (Tei Shiryū), who was banished from the court and fled to Japan nineteen years earlier for similarly warning the emperor of treacherous courtiers. But the emperor refuses to believe Go Sankei. The emperor