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The Death of Ichiwaka: A Translation of a Scene from the
Jōruri Play *The Wada Battles and the Woman's Dancing Crane*
(*Wada-kassen Onna-maizuru*, 1736) by Namiki Sōsuke

並木宗輔作浄瑠璃『和田合戦女舞鶴』第三切「市若最期」

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要旨

本稿は江戸中期の浄瑠璃・歌舞伎の作者である並木宗輔（千柳）（一六九五～一七五一）の初期の作品である元文元年（一七三六）大坂豊竹座初演『和田合戦女舞鶴』第三切「市若最期」の英訳である。作品は鎌倉初期の勇婦板額が我が子市若を、北条政子の孫の身替りとして死なせざるを得ないという悲劇的な場面であり、現在も歌舞伎で上演されることがある。

大坂の道頓堀にあった竹本座のために宗輔によって延享三年（一七四六）に書かれた『菅原伝授手習鑑』、翌年の『義経千本桜』、翌々年の『仮名手本忠臣蔵』の三作品は、浄瑠璃の「三大名作」と称される。これらの浄瑠璃は、宗輔が実質的な立作者であったことが現在の学術界の定説となっている。

宗輔の作者としての経歴は四半世紀にわたるが、その初めの十六年間の作品は、より有名な竹本座ではなく、同じく道頓堀にあった豊竹座のためにおいて初演された。現在の文楽では、宗輔の前期の浄瑠璃は、三大名作を含む後期のものと比べて上演回数をはるかに少ない。しかし、前期宗輔の作品には佳作が多く、非常に興味深いものがある。その独特のドラマツルギーや人生観を理解する上で、この前期の作品は欠かせないものであろう。その重要性から広くその価値の認識を得るために英訳を試みた。

本稿を成すにあたり、同志社大学の西岡直樹先生、天理大学附属天理図書館、国書刊行会より翻訳許可をいただきました。記して深謝申し上げます。

キーワード

並木宗輔（千柳）、浄瑠璃、豊竹座、身替り、板額

Keywords

Namiki Sōsuke (Senryū); jōruri; Toyotake-za; substitution sacrifice, Hangaku

Introduction

While Namiki Sōsuke 並木宗輔 (also Senryū 千柳, 1695-1751) must be counted as one of the most influential of Japanese playwrights, he is also one of the least known in modern Japan. He wrote for the jōruri 浄瑠璃 theatre (today usually known as Bunraku 文楽) which is made up of narrative, musical accompaniment on the *shamisen* 三味線, and puppetry. Most specialists now acknowledge Uchiyama Mikiko's 内山美樹子 theory (1989) that Sōsuke is the principal writer of three of the most celebrated works of jōruri, all co-authored: *Sugawara-denju tenarai-kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑 (Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy, 1746), *Yoshitsune senbonzakura* 義経千本桜 (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees, 1747), and *Kanadehon Chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers, 1748). Moreover, adaptations of these plays for the Kabuki theatre count among the most popular plays ever performed in Japan.

Sōsuke's career spans the quarter century from 1726 until his death in 1751. His output was prolific: he wrote or co-wrote some 47 jōruri plays, as well as 10 written specifically for the kabuki theatre. In the majority of the collaborations, it is thought that he was the main writer (*tate-sakusha* 立作者), which would involve devising the main details of the plot, authoring the most important parts of the play, and assigning his co-writers to write less important scenes. However, we know even less about his life than we do about that of Shakespeare: even the region of his birth is unknown, and we certainly have no reliable anecdotes concerning his life. What can be said for certain is that he became a Zen monk at the Jōjuji 成就寺 temple in Mihara 三原 (present-day Hiroshima Prefecture), and that some poems in Chinese written by him during this period are found in an anthology (Tsunoda, 1956). In 1726, he became a regular writer at the Toyotake-za 豊竹座 jōruri theatre, and most of the biographical information we have about him after this is derived from the listings of his name in published works and theatre programmes.

The Toyotake-za theatre was somewhat of a junior presence compared to the venerable Takemoto-za 竹本座 which had been a showcase for the supreme talents

of the playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 and the seminal chanter Takemoto Gidayū I 竹本義太夫. But the competition between the two theatres would be one of the factors behind the acknowledged ‘golden age’ of jōruri which would occur during a short period in the 1740s.

The Toyotake-za adopted the *gidayū-bushi* 義太夫節 style of the more senior theatre, but developed its own distinctive house style. The music and chanting style, which frequently used a distinctive note on the major scale (*gin* ギン), would become known as the ‘Eastern style’ (*higashi-fū* 東風), as the theatre lay to the east of the Takemoto-za. The style of this theatre was something of a paradox. On the one hand, the main chanter, later known as Echizen no Shōjō 越前少掾, was renowned for his beautiful voice, particularly in the middle and upper registers and thus eminently suitable for taking on the voices of female characters. On the other hand, the writing style of Ki no Kaion 紀海音, the first house writer, lacked Chikamatsu’s empathetic humanism, and had a cold, intellectual and logical tendency. Watanabe Tamotsu has described this as being in the tradition of a ‘classical Chinese’ style, as opposed to the more Japanese style of Chikamatsu (2009). However, perhaps his eventual influence on the development of later theatre equalled, or was even greater than, that of Chikamatsu himself.

Sōsuke inherited and refined the tradition of his predecessor Kaion. Certainly, his characters have greater psychological depth than Kaion’s. Also, his plots have much greater structural unity and continuity than those of Kaion – his methods in certain plays have frequently been compared to those of modern detective novels – and contain fewer inconsistencies. Unusually for pre-modern Japanese literature, miracles and supernatural workings play little or no part in Sōsuke’s works from this period. But Sōsuke’s early style, characterised by pessimism and fatalism, probably owes more to Kaion than to Chikamatsu. The redemption offered to Chikamatsu’s characters, and the transcendent quality accorded to acts of self-sacrifice in the tradition founded by Chikamatsu are mostly absent from Sōsuke’s early work.

The scene translated here is the climax of the five-act history play (*jidaimono*

時代物) entitled *Wada-kassen Onna-maizuru* 和田合戦女舞鶴 (The Wada Battles and the Woman's Dancing Crane), written by Sōsuke in 1736 during his short period of solo writing. The main character in this scene is the female warrior Hangaku 板額, while the 'woman's dancing crane' referred to in the title refers to her family crest, depicted on her robes. Along with Tomoe 巴, Hangaku was one of the two great female warriors of the medieval period. Sōsuke stresses the dual aspect of Hangaku's personality which combines traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics. For not only is she a warrior of almost supernatural strength, but also a faithful, loving wife, loved in turn by her husband, and a devoted mother to Ichiwaka 市若, the heir of the family. Indeed, this dual nature, which combines the masculine and the feminine, is suggested in the very title of the play.

At the heart of the drama is the sacrifice that Hangaku must make. She must see her own son die so that his head may be substituted for that of the grandson of the dowager shogun Hōjō Masako 北条政子, whom Hangaku serves. The dramatic device of substitution sacrifice (*migawari* 身替り) originates in Noh plays such as *Manjū* 満仲, in which a young boy volunteers to die in the place of his higher-ranking comrade. From the time of Chikamatsu, this became such a common device in jōruri that it risked becoming a dramatic cliché. But the dramatists of the time recognised its power to attract audiences to the theatres, and the device became ever more widely used, sometimes occurring two or three times in the same play. Perhaps the highly stratified society of the time meant that scenes of tremendous sacrifice for a superior had a particular emotional pull on audiences. At any rate, the dramatists went to great lengths to make the sacrifices as novel as possible. Suwa Haruo points out that a defining characteristic of Sōsuke's plays is that the victims of such sacrifices are often 'diverted victims': the victim dies for a reason unconnected with the sacrifice, and his body is used by another person to carry out a substitution sacrifice (Suwa, 1986). This is certainly the case in *The Dancing Crane*, where Hangaku effectively lies to her son, making him believe that he is actually the son of a murderer, and shaming him into committing ritual suicide. The truth – that his head is to serve as a substitute for

a young prince whom he has never met – is only revealed to the child as he taking his dying breaths.

This scene features two dramatic features that are distinctive of Sōsuke's early work, and will continue to some degree in his later works. The first of these, long associated by specialists with Sōsuke's style, is mystery-solving (*nazo-toki* 謎解き). The mysteries, often set by a particular character in the play, frequently require cultural knowledge, such as knowledge of a poem or an historical episode, to solve them. It is interesting that it was Sōsuke who embraced this device, as he had a detailed knowledge of the mediaeval epics that was deep even in comparison to the playwrights of his age (Uchiyama, 1989).

In this case this scene, the enigma posed has a tragic solution. Asari no Yoichi 阿佐利与市, Hangaku's ex-husband who has divorced her for political reasons, sends their eleven-year old son Ichiwaka over to her. Asari has dressed him in full armour. Mysteriously, however, he has left untied the 'cord of restraint' (*shinobi-no-o* 忍びの緒) that is used to attach the helmet. Hangaku interprets this portent joyfully, as a sign that the Asari wishes Hangaku to 'retie the knot' and to restore relations. When Hangaku ties it for Ichiwaka, in an act which further emphasises Ichiwaka's dependency and innocence, the cord breaks cleanly, suggesting that Asari has already cut half-way through it. Ichiwaka himself wonders if, following a historical precedent, this means he is intended to die. Hangaku denies this and reassures the child, but the narrator's reference to the 'afterlife' in the following narrative phrase suggests that the audience should interpret Hangaku's optimistic interpretation as an example of dramatic irony. This tragic misreading of a portent has echoes of Sophoclean tragedy such as *Œdipus Rex*.

The second dramatic feature could perhaps be termed 'sudden alienation,' and seems to occur repeatedly in Sōsuke's works of this period. A character, who believes her or himself part of a cohesive group and acting for a common aim, suddenly realises that they in reality the other members of the group share vital knowledge that she or he does not. In this case, the moment comes when Hangaku realises that

she is expected to sacrifice her son in the place of her mistress Masako's grandson. Masako planned for this sacrifice to happen, and Hangaku's peer, Tsunade, knew about it. Even Hangaku's husband was told, as he had been given orders to send his son to be sacrificed. But Asari had kept this vital information from his wife Hangaku. So Hangaku suddenly realises that her son has been sent over for the purpose of being killed by her own hand – and also that she is the only one who was ignorant of this fact. On the contrary, up to that point, she had been glowing with pride at the thought that Ichiwaka had been sent to perform a glorious deed.

This chilling use of 'sudden alienation' raises the question of whether Sōsuke was trying to expose the contradictions and hypocrisy inherent in a feudal, collectivist society, or whether this is rather a device to bring the sympathies of the audience for the character into sharp definition. Perhaps there is something of both, but it certainly expresses Sōsuke's view of human beings – a view that combines empathy for the weak individual with an awareness of the damage that humans unconsciously inflict on their neighbours, despite their best intentions. With his interest in themes such as alienation and absurdity (as we can perhaps see in the ineffectual 'boy's army' sent by the shogun) we could maybe call Sōsuke something of an existentialist writer before his time.

With regard to the style of the text, jōruri texts, with their heavy influence from the mediaeval military epics (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語), frequently contain classical turns of phrase and literary expressions. In fact, glosses of difficult words and expressions from jōruri circulated as early as the eighteenth century. Ultimately, however, the texts are conceived to be chanted and listened to, rather than read silently. Sōsuke's style, in particular, combines logical, intellectual elements with immediacy and emotional force, rather than the lyrical beauty that characterises Chikamatsu's most famous passages.

There is as yet no annotated edition of this work in Japanese, but I have used the transcription by Professor Nishioka Naoki 西岡直樹 (Dōshisha University) of the text contained at the Tenri Central Library 天理大学附属天理図書館, published in

the collection *Sōsho Edo bunko 11: Toyotake-za jōruri-shū (2)* 叢書江戸文庫 豊竹座浄瑠璃集〔二〕 by Kokusho Kankōkai 国書刊行会 (1990, Tokyo). I should here like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Nishioka, the Tenri Central Library, and Kokusho Kankōkai for permission to translate this text. I would also like to extend my thanks to Professor Philip Flavin (Osaka University of Economics and Law), whose careful reading of my text led me to make a number of corrections and changes. The errors that remain are of course my own.

THE DEATH OF ICHIWAKA The Final Scene of the Third Act of *The Wada Battles and the Woman's Dancing Crane* by Namiki Sōsuke

Dramatis Personae

HŌJŌ MASAKO 北条政子, here called the 'Reverend Nun' (*ama-gimi* 尼君). The dowager of the first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate, Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝; mother of the second shogun, Yoriie 頼家 (now deceased), as well as the third and present shogun, Sanetomo 実朝. She is harbouring Tsunade and Kinsato, the mother and son of the supposed traitor Egara no Heita, despite the attempts of shogun Sanetomo to take him prisoner in order to punish him in the place of his father. Despite her Buddhist vows, her behaviour in this scene is vain and self-centred.

HANGAKU, 板額 a female warrior of exceptional strength and valour. Until recently in a loving marriage to Asari no Yoichi, and doting mother of the young Ichiwaka. In a previous scene, she was divorced by Asari for political reasons due to her family relationship with the supposed murderer Egara no Heita.

ASARI NO YOICHI YOSHITŌ 阿佐利与市義遠, a shogunal vassal who made a love marriage with Hangaku but was later obliged to divorce her. He has been charged by

the shogun Sanetomo with carrying out the capital punishment of the young Kinsato.

TSUNADE 綱手, the wife of Egara no Heita Tanenaga 荏柄平太胤長. Heita used to be a loyal retainer of the shogun Sanetomo, but has apparently turned traitor by killing the Sanetomo's younger sister, Princess Itsuki.

KINSATOMARU 公暁丸, usually referred to as Kinsato. Seemingly the child of the supposed traitor Egara no Heita and his wife Tsunade. Since Heita himself has disappeared, the shogun has ordered that Kinsato be decapitated in his place. However, for unknown reasons, Masako is shielding him from execution. During the course of the scene it is revealed that he is actually Zensaimaru 善哉丸, Masako's grandson.

ICHIWAKAMARU 市若丸, usually referred to as Ichiwaka. Yoichi and Hangaku's beloved son. Eleven years old by the traditional Japanese system of reckoning, but in the western system he could be as young as nine or ten. His innocence and dependence, as well as his childish bravado, are emphasised in the play.

BOYS in a children's army, composed of the sons, aged eleven and younger, of the greatest warriors serving the shogunal house. They are sent from the shogun Sanetomo to his mother Masako's residence in order to demand the punishment of Kinsato.

a LADY-IN-WAITING to Masako

MAIDSERVANTS in Masako's household

Scene: The Residence of Hōjō Masako, the widow of the shogun Yoritomo, in Kamakura

Time: During the early Kamakura period, c. 1203. A night in late summer or autumn.

NARRATOR: Lady Masako, the reverend nun, is harbouring [the murderer] Egara's wife and child. This is despite admonishments that her extreme clemency will harm her by provoking strife between her and her son, the shogun Sanetomo. Having turned her viewing pavilion into a watchtower, she has placed

reinforcements at the gates of her residence, and has resolved to die in battle should Sanetomo's pursuing troops arrive.

Apprehensive about her true intentions, maidservants and manservants gather, unable to make eye-contact in the night.

FIRST MAIDSERVANT: What do you make of it, everyone? They say that a huge number of troops are heading here to capture Egara's wife and child. They've spent their days mastering advanced notions of strategy. Shouldn't we make a retreat while we still have our lives? Rather than grappling with a renowned warrior, I'd prefer to grapple and die in battle with my beloved man! ¹

NARRATOR: She gets excitable.

SECOND MAIDSERVANT: Oh, do show some restraint! It is a great misdeed for a woman to show her back to the enemy. All the more so because we have Hangaku on our side: a strong-spirited woman who is even mother to a child. Even sending fifty or seventy thousand troops here would be as useless as brandishing a stick in an empty building, or chasing flies in bed with your jaw! ² You can't help admiring her.

NARRATOR: As they are having this childish conversation, Egara's wife enters. She is called Tsunade, but unable to rely on her declining fortunes, her spirit is becoming warped.³

TSUNADE: Listen, all of you! Depending on the strength of that woman Hangaku

1 As C. Andrew Gerstle has indicated (1986), the structure of jōruri employs a repeated heightening and lowering of dramatic tension. In the final scene of the third act, conventionally considered the most central and tragic part of the play, comic and suggestive exchanges by lower-class characters were often used to set off the high drama occurring later in the scene.

2 Popular proverbs suggesting futile action.

3 Tsunade's 綱手 name (etymologically: 'rope hand') refers to a rope used for towing a boat, suggesting she has a steadfast character. Later on in the play, her tragic death will lead the shogun Sanetomo to incorporate her name in a poem, recited as a requiem for her soul.

alone is a dangerous plan. Are you thinking of making a target of yourselves, of dying in battle? Foolish people!

NARRATOR: Finding these disdainful words unpleasant, Hangaku comes down from the lookout.

HANGAKU: (*ironically*) Oh, what stirring words, Lady Tsunade! If that's what you think, why did you bring your son here to Lady Masako and plead for your life so abjectly? Lord Sanetomo is now unable to pay his respects to his mother. He's said that while it doesn't matter about Egara's wife, their boy Kinsato is the son of a man who has murdered his princess, and so his head must be taken and handed over to him. This conflict is the result of the dispute between Lady Masako and her son, with the one saying, 'I demand it!' and the other, 'It shall not be!' If you are truly as brave as your words, then stab Kinsato to death. And you should kill yourself, too! But I see you cling miserably to life.

NARRATOR: Tsunade is humiliated.

TSUNADE: No, listen! To prove I do not fear death, I have begged to take my leave from here several times. But our lady told me, 'Egara is the criminal who killed my daughter, but you, mother and child, know nothing about this. I have a reason for harbouring you both, parent and child.' A profoundly mysterious statement. Even should I wish to die, I cannot ...

NARRATOR: But not allowing her to finish her words ...

HANGAKU: What an awful, awful excuse for staying alive! The executioners could come and attack us at any moment. Do you expect to calm the situation simply by saying that there was a 'deep reason' behind your actions?

TSUNADE: Oh, I've already thought of something for when that time comes.

HANGAKU: Well, in that case, *now's* the time to show your resolve! Strike off your son Kinsato's head, and in so doing restore the relationship between Lady Masako and her son!

TSUNADE: No! Not that ...

HANGAKU: 'Not that'? Coward!

NARRATOR: Was their glaring quarrel heard elsewhere? From an inside room, a lady-in-waiting comes running out.

LADY-IN-WAITING: I have come bearing Lady Masako's wishes. Lady Hangaku, you are to guard the front of the residence, and organise a strict night watch. Lady Tsunade is to come inside first.

NARRATOR: Thinking how the lady-in-waiting has appeared at just the right moment, Tsunade leads the others into the inside room. Disconcerted, Hangaku glares at her, thinking, 'Our lady has shown an excess of mercy, and now the realm is in uproar!' While alone, lost in resentful thoughts, the sounds of the military camp can be heard nearby. The troops care little about staying in line, and their bells and drums all sound at once. They raise a resounding battle cry.

Realising that it is a night attack, Hangaku climbs to the lookout post. As she mounts, she sees torches and lanterns twinkling like stars. In the vanguard are Sasaki's youngest son, Tsunawakamaru, and Doi no Sanechiyo. In the second wave are Chiba no Sukewaka and Tanewaka. She sees dragonfly-head knots here and there, and hears the voices of children aged eleven and younger.⁴

BOYS: We have come to take the head of Egara's son, Kinsato. If you don't open up, you are cowards and weaklings! Do you think we are scared? Heh, heh! Hah! Laugh boys, laugh!

NARRATOR: They cry out noisily. Hangaku soon realises what is happening. 'The lord must be considering not only the laws of the land, but also the courtesy that children must use towards their parents. Using children to resist? What a perfect solution!' she thinks admiringly. 'Surely my child Ichiwaka must be among their number!' She peers out in the faint light, and surveys the scene. But mysteriously,

4 A dragonfly-head knot (*tonbo-gashira* 蜻蛉頭) is a decorative cord knot resembling a dragonfly's head, used to attach material in a similar way to a button. In the traditional Japanese system a child was counted as one year old at birth, and one year was added to its age each New Year. Therefore a child of 'eleven' would have been closer to nine or ten in the Western system – too young to take part in a real battle.

The Death of Ichiwaka (Jonathan MILLS)

there are none who resemble him. She calls from the lookout.

HANGAKU: Oh, children, I have something to ask you. If Asari no Yoichi's son is among you, a child of the name of Ichiwaka, could you just call him here for me, please?

NARRATOR: Sasaki no Tsunawaka, in the vanguard, replies.

TSUNAWAKA: Ichiwaka's my friend. I invited him on the way here, but he said he wouldn't, and he didn't come out to join us.

NARRATOR: He says this, and from the mouths of those near him:

BOY: I also called round to invite him. He said that battles were scary, so he would come later, or stay guarding the home or something. He squirmed and wouldn't come with us. We won't let that sort of coward be part of *our* group of friends any more!

NARRATOR: The parent, hearing her child criticised in their tales, feels her chest tighten and is speechless for a moment.

HANGAKU: Oh, children! You see, what people call a 'night attack' means drawing close to people in their sleep and using deceit to slay them – it's a cowardly way to do battle. If Ichiwaka didn't come, that must be the reason!

NARRATOR: She clouds the issue.

HANGAKU: If you want to achieve great deeds, you should all come back here at dawn – the time you always have breakfast. Auntie here will use her influence and make sure that you can perform great deeds. So for tonight – back home to bed!

NARRATOR: She delays matters aimlessly, perplexed that her own child has not come. Are these feelings due to a parent's karma?

The soldiers speak, with absolutely no distinction of rank.

FIRST BOY: If making battle at night is cowardly, then we'll come back as soon as day breaks tomorrow. When that time comes, please let us do great deeds!

NARRATOR: First one asks a favour, and then another.

SECOND BOY: Auntie, let me perform a brave deed, too!

THIRD BOY: No, let me do one!

NARRATOR: They compete ever louder in their requests, then innocently strike up their bells and drums and, for the time being, retreat from their positions.

Hangaku gazes after them.

HANGAKU: (*to herself*) They beg me for brave deeds to do as though I were their aunt – but why does my son Ichiwaka not come? Even supposing my son were cowardly, his father would surely encourage him and send him over. Has his old childhood illness flared up? Or, seeing that he is now a motherless child, has his father spoilt him and given him too much to eat, making him ill? ⁵

NARRATOR: She worries restlessly, lost in thought until the time she might see his face again. She closes the paper sliding door: time moves on.

After a while, her son, Ichiwaka, arrives for his first battle at the age of eleven. Wearing a deerskin dyed with a brocade pattern, with a crest fixed to his helmet, he carries a bow and arrow under his arm. From in front of the gate he cries out loudly.

ICHIWAKA: This is Asari no Yoichi's son Ichiwaka! I have stolen a march on the others in order to take Kinsato's head. Let this arrow be proof of my intentions – the first blood offering of the battle!

NARRATOR: He draws an arrow, which flies to hit the gate pillar. It enters and sticks in three inches – a brave act, while pathetically moving.⁶

As soon as Hangaku hears her son, she pushes open the gate and flies out.

HANGAKU: Oh, has Ichiwaka come? I couldn't have waited for you any longer! I'm so glad you've come!

NARRATOR: Her happiness overwhelms her, and Ichiwaka speaks too.

5 He is motherless because of the recent divorce of Hangaku and Yoichi (who still love each other) for political reasons.

6 The blood offering (*chi-matsuri* 血祭り) was the ritual killing of a captured enemy performed by an army setting off for battle. As in the case of the other boy soldiers, it is the ironic gap between the bravado of the young Ichiwaka's words and the innocence of his actions that may be considered pathetically moving.

ICHIWAKA: Mother! I haven't seen you for such a long time – how I've longed to see you!

NARRATOR: He clings to her.

HANGAKU: Oh, it's perfectly normal that you wanted to see me. I wanted to see you, too! After my husband and I separated, I didn't stop thinking about you for a moment. Just now, when your friends came round, they told me that you hated battle – that you had escaped. When I heard them speaking ill of you, it made me even more anxious. Oh, why are you so late?

ICHIWAKA: Well, an order went out from our lord to his retainers. In our case, Father came back from his lord saying, 'You have the job of taking Kinsato's head! Bravo! Go out there and do this brave deed.' This was his heartfelt order. So please let me alone do this brave deed, and make a name for myself!

NARRATOR: He says this thinking only of his own honour. She nods in assent.

HANGAKU: Oh, well said! If I didn't let you carry out this brave deed, whom else could I allow? Hmm, you're certainly your mother's child! And you're worthy of your father, Lord Asari. Your spirit, your warrior's courage – can there possibly be any other child quite so brave? But, well, this armour – what eccentric person put it on you this way? And who put your helmet so far back on your head? ⁷ It must have been your father!

NARRATOR: She pushes it around, twists it around ...

HANGAKU: Oh, Ichiwaka! Why isn't your cord of restraint tied in place? ⁸ It's been loosened.

7 Wearing one's helmet far back on one's head improved visibility but rendered the soldier more vulnerable. Called the 'boar-neck' (*ikubi* 猪首) style because it made the neck appear shorter and thicker, it could be considered as brave – or reckless.

8 The 'cord of restraint' (*shinobi-no-o* 忍びの緒) is the name given to the cord that keeps the helmet in place on the head. The verb *shinobu* 忍ぶ often refers to meeting for a secret love tryst, thus Hangaku's excitement. Later in the scene, when Ichiwaka's father silently approaches the walls of the residence to listen to his son's fate, *shinobu* is used in the narration to refer to the clandestine nature of his behaviour.

NARRATOR: As Hangaku realises this ...

ICHIWAKA: No, these were Father's orders: 'If you meet your mother, get her to tie it!'

HANGAKU: Why would he want me to tie it? Ah, I know! In the past, he was forced by a warrior's duty to cut the ties of matrimony. But, unknown to others, he is still lost in thoughts of love. 'If there's a chance, meet me secretly – let the cord of secret emotions be tied.' That's his intention. Let me tie it up!

NARRATOR: Celebrating the good portent, she vigorously begins to tie the restraint cord in a tight knot. But it breaks cleanly, and falls. This looks as though it has been deliberately arranged. The mother is taken aback, but the son is even more perturbed.

ICHIWAKA: Oh, Mother! I've heard that those who go to battle with the intention of dying cut their cords of restraint.⁹ Am I also to die in battle? Was it to die that I came here?

NARRATOR: Hangaku is on the brink of tears, but holds them back.

HANGAKU: Oh, what a miserable child! Don't say such worrying things. It's only Egara's son we're talking about! You could kill him as easily as you'd crush an insect with your finger. Sooner or later, that shogunal order will catch up with him. I'll ask Lady Masako to let you strike off his head. Let Mother fix the cord back on properly for you. Come over here!

NARRATOR: She claps her hands with emotion, and they head off inside the gate. Moving, as are waves on an inlet. Parent and child, unaware that the broken cord evokes thoughts of the afterlife, go together in high spirits go together into the room.

9 This is based on an episode from the siege of Osaka Castle by the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. It was found that a dead enemy warrior had cut his helmet cord before going into battle. Ieyasu pronounced that since the warrior had had no intention of using the helmet again, then his death must have been premeditated. This episode would surely have been familiar to Sōsuke's Osaka audience a few generations later.

‘There are bamboo groves to abandon a child, but none to abandon a life’¹⁰ – an allusion common in this world. Asari no Yoichi feels the sadness of the situation as though he were there himself, but there is a deep reason behind his sending Ichiwaka as an executioner. The dawn moon, like his heart, is darkened by a cloud. Pulled by the cords of his feelings, he draws near to the front of the gates. He looks around himself and gazes at the residence. ‘There is a lookout post. Here is a matted room. To find out what is happening inside, I’ll stay here – this very spot.’ He sidles up to one of the outer walls and starts to listen attentively.

Lady Masako comes out of an inside room leading Egara’s wife and child, and arrives close to the front of the building. Spotting an opportunity, Hangaku comes out of her own room and prostrates herself, kneeling with her hands to the ground.

HANGAKU: What was said to be Sanetomo’s troops was actually a battalion of children aged eleven and younger. This was thanks to the consideration of our filially-pious lord. If you resist him and refuse to hand Kinsato over, it will be pushing your parental pride to the point of selfishness. But if you hurry to cut off his head and hand it over to the shogun, your heart will be put at ease, as you will be obeying two laws: the law of the land, and that of human morality. Please leave things in my hands!

NARRATOR: This new resolve will be the seed of the brave deed she will allow her son do. Tears float to Lady Masako’s eyes.

MASAKO: Your husband, Asari no Yoichi, hasn’t told you anything about what is going on, has he? We provisionally told him to divulge nothing. But not even confiding in the wife he lived with – what an admirable warrior! Since things have come to this, I see no use in hiding anything. It is a falsehood that this ‘Kinsato’ is Egara’s son. The truth is that he is Zensaimaru, the son of the former shogun Yoriei.

10 A proverb implying that one who has fallen into dire poverty is more likely to abandon their child than to throw away their own life.

HANGAKU: So, he's the child who was born to Yoriie's concubine?

MASAKO: He is. But now, hear of the baseness of my heart! Planning to make the child a priest, I entrusted him and his nursemaid to the head priest of the Tsurugaoka shrine.¹¹ Since my son Sanetomo has no children, I came to think of this child as the successor if necessary. It must be the child's karma that caused this. And fearing people's criticism, I asked your husband Yoichi and Tsunade's husband Heita to steal him back secretly. The head priest, however, is pursuing thorough investigations, and so to see things through for the time being, we entrusted him to Heita and his wife, and said that he was their child: thus our present difficulties. Why did I do this? Well, were it said that I, a nun, had incurred heaven's displeasure by returning the child to the laity, I should be so ashamed that we would be ready to commit suicide together! Try to imagine the sadness inside my heart!

NARRATOR: She sobs convulsively. As she is deploring her situation, Tsunade joins in.

TSUNADE: And if he were truly my own child, why should I go to such extraordinary lengths to help him? Clear your doubts!

NARRATOR: Listening to these explanations, Hangaku's chest starts to deflate repeatedly.

HANGAKU: Ah, so that means that ... my husband Asari no Yoichi ... the fact that Kinsato ... is Yoriie's son ...¹²

TSUNADE: He knew! Of course he knew! Yoichi became a yoyo-seller or something of that sort, and Heita a bird-seller.¹³ They hid Zensaimaru in a box and brought

11 The Tsurugaoka Hachimangū shrine 鶴岡八幡宮 at Kamakura, associated with the shoguns of the Kamakura period. Before the Meiji Restoration, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples could be found sharing the same sites.

12 Hangaku's shock in realising that she alone has been excluded from the knowledge of Kinsato's true identity, and her realisation of its terrible implications, are reflected in her somewhat disjointed syntax.

him back.

NARRATOR: Hangaku stutters with shock. The riddle of the 'cord of restraint' that her husband posed for her is solved, and she feels suffering in her breast.

Yoichi too, listening at the front of the residence, is feeling weak. 'Surely when my wife considers all the facts, her heart will ache and she will despise me – how unfortunate she is!' But silencing his voice, he restrains his weeping so that no noise be heard. Prince Kinsato speaks, in a manner more mature than his years.

ZENSAIMARU: I do not fear the idea of ending my own life. But I should like to save the life of my grandmother. I ask for your goodwill in this matter.

NARRATOR: He speaks this single phrase, which touches all present to the quick.¹⁴ Masako draws near.

MASAKO: While it is said that a human's lifespan is fifty years, I have passed sixty.¹⁵ If I let my only grandchild die before me, what good would it be for me to live on? I should say my final intonations of the Buddha's name till daybreak, and that would be the end of it all. If only there were some way to save the life of this child, even if this nun's life should end! Help me, Hangaku!

NARRATOR: Heartfelt, like a heavy burden are her orders – Hangaku has no way to refuse. Speaking thus, Masako tearfully leads the young prince and Tsunade into the Buddhist altar room. Her heart is sad.

Left behind, Hangaku raises up her tearful face.

13 A *te-guruma* 手車 was a sort of yo-yo made of wood or clay. This abduction occurred in an earlier scene. The idea of a character of high rank disguising himself as one of lower rank derives from Osaka kabuki and became common in the jōruri theatre of the time. Incidentally, Tsunade's attitude to the distress of her peer Hangaku seems far from sympathetic.

14 The only utterance of Zensaimaru in this scene. The author does not intend the audience to feel any emotional connection with this young prince, for whom, nevertheless, such great sacrifices must be made.

15 A common saying related that humans could expect to have a lifespan of fifty years.

HANGAKU: (*to herself*) Oh, can't you hear this, husband? If you knew that Kinsato was Yorie's son, why didn't you confide in me? You encouraged Ichiwaka to come here, cruelly calling him an executioner. When you half-cut his cord of restraint and bade him ask his mother to tie it, did this mean you were ordering me to stab him? A substitution sacrifice? He somehow knew what would happen, and said to me anxiously, 'Mother, am I to die in battle?' When I think about it now, it was a message from the gods, even if I didn't realise it at the time. When I saw the other boys' splendid appearance, I wondered 'Why is my Ichiwaka late? Surely he must be coming?' Why did I so look forward to seeing my child, who would come here to die? Had I known you had sent him here to be killed, I would not have longed to see him so ...

NARRATOR: As she sobs convulsively, lamenting the turn of events, her husband is outside the wall.

YOICHI: (*to himself*) But would I willingly have asked him this and sent him here, if not obliged by loyalty to my lord? When Ichiwaka told me, 'Father, I'll go out and do my brave deed!' and marched out, full of bravado, imagine the feelings in my heart! I came here secretly, wanting to meet him again if only for one last time ...

NARRATOR: He reaches up and stands on tiptoes, but still the wall divides them. His feelings of separation grow ever deeper and all he can do is to shed tears.

Did Ichiwaka know of this? He quietly and slowly comes out of the room.

ICHIWAKA: Mother? I thought there must be some good news. I've been waiting, but haven't heard any noise. Let me do my brave deed before my friends arrive – then my father will praise me!

NARRATOR: An innocent child, he does not know she is going to kill him. On seeing this, the mother sobs, but then swaps her tears for her loyalty to her superiors.

HANGAKU: I see, I see. I'll let you do a great deed that will be renowned for generations to come. Ichiwaka, the child of a warrior can never know when he must die. If, well, you ...were Heita's child, Kinsato, and a soldier came from the ruler to slay you ...ah, what do you imagine you would do?

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ICHIWAKA: But that's obvious! Rather than have people pointing their finger at me in shame as the child of one who had murdered his own mistress, I would cut my stomach open in good grace, and have people say, 'He behaved like a warrior!'

HANGAKU: Ah, you'd cut your stomach ...

ICHIWAKA: Yes.

HANGAKU: Oh, this stomach. Your stomach ...

NARRATOR: She starts sobbing, but holds back her tears. She gazes at his face.

HANGAKU: Oh, in your case that must be true! With a brave heart such as you have, it's natural that you want to do courageous deeds. But if you're all dressed up like that, Kinsato won't relax his guard! Take off your armour, get into your everyday clothes, and hide in that room. When Mother asks you, you'll be able to do a deed so brave that your father will be proud!

NARRATOR: She unfastens the cords of his armour as her tears are forming. She takes off his deerskin garment, his best apparel for the journey to the other world, and sees underneath a death garment of purest white.

HANGAKU: (*to herself*) How I loathe my selfish, cruel husband who made him wear it!

NARRATOR: Her husband weeps outside the wall.

YOICHI: (*to himself*) I have a manly spirit of loyalty, but if it came down to it I couldn't kill him. But she's a strong woman! Surely she can slay him, she can kill him!

NARRATOR: He jumps up, runs up to the lookout stone, and puts his hands on the wall.

YOICHI: (*to himself*) If I had wings, I would fly in to see his face ...

NARRATOR: But even with resolve upon resolve, he is simply unable to answer her words.

Hangaku hides the tears in her voice.

HANGAKU: Oh, Ichiwaka! As I said just now, hide in that room. Whatever might happen, don't come out until I call you out! I'll give you a brave deed to do. Not

just your father, but all the warriors of Kamakura will praise you as a model.
Leave it to your mother!

NARRATOR: She pushes her child inside, aware that this shut-up room will be his dying place. She wrings her sleeve of the tears that prove she is unable to renounce him. She goes around extinguishing the lights. Masako and Tsunade hide the young prince Zensaimaru behind them, and grasping their daggers in precaution, they instinctively pull him further away. 'Letting him do a brave deed? What can this mean?' they wonder. Their female single-mindedness will be their defence. Outside, Yoichi finds it suspicious that the noise inside has died down. He listens carefully all around him. Hangaku moves slowly and quietly in the darkness, hiding the noise of her feet, and then, she stamps – clatter, clatter – on the floorboards, moving around at the front of the building as though someone were arriving. Then she comes back to the room. Just as if none of this had happened, she raises an angry voice.

HANGAKU: Who is it? Who did I just see there? What! It's Egara no Heita? Ugh!
You're the one who killed our princess! I shan't let you escape!

NARRATOR: She stands up, and – for what purpose? – draws near him.

Masako and Tsunade, wondering whether all this is truly happening, draw close to peep inside the room, but see no one. Ichiwaka knows none of this, and he listens from within that room. Outside, Yoichi readies his armour, and both parties listen to what is happening.

Making her words even angrier ...

HANGAKU: What are you saying, Heita? You've come secretly to tell me, Hangaku, something? Oh, so let's hear it! How about it? No! No – what are you saying? You've come to take Ichiwaka back? Oh, you can't! Of course he's your child, but since his birth it's me who has taken him in. I raised him together with Lord Yoichi. He's ours! Asking us to give him back so late? What a headstrong fellow! Now, look here! You are without doubt the killer of your lady. If Ichiwaka were to be called the son of a criminal who has killed his superior, he would be obliged

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to cut his stomach open. Just now, I asked him what he would do if he were in the place of Kinsato. He answered that he would cut his stomach open with good grace, and have it said that he died just like a warrior should! He'll die from wanting his parents to praise him – that's his fate! Oh, that expression you have! As if you want to get into that room ... What? You're going to stamp your way in and take him back with you? Just try taking him! No, where are you ...? No, you can't! Hold on!

NARRATOR: Alone, she makes the footsteps of two people. Yoichi guesses that she cannot kill him with her own female hand, and this must be a plot to make their child cut his own stomach. But Masako and Tsunade are perplexed and tormented, trying to imagine what must be happening in the room. How moving! Ichiwaka is crying.

ICHIWAKA: (*to himself*) So, I'm the son of Egara no Heita, the man who killed his lady? How unworthy! How sad!

NARRATOR: Standing he cries; sitting he cries. All other options exhausted, he sits down on the floor and, invoking the Amitabha Buddha, draws his short sword and quickly stabs it into the side of his chest. Seeing the smoke-like spurt of blood through the paper partition, his mother seems to be going out of her mind.

HANGAKU: Oh, he's cut his stomach – bravo!

NARRATOR: At the sound of her running, Asari is also half out of his mind, while Masako and Tsunade wonder what has happened. The young prince, Zensaimaru, lifts up a lamp to see the pitiful Ichiwaka gasping in painful breaths.

ICHIWAKA: Oh, Mother! Up to this moment, I had thought myself your real child. But listening carefully, I realise I am Lord Egara's child, and so the son of one who killed his lord. There's no way to save the situation. I shall die with good grace. And if Father regrets that I died without having committed a brave deed, please make the best excuses on my behalf! Even if I am Egara's child, in the end I think of you and Yoichi as my parents. Think of me as your child, and offer a requiem for my soul!

NARRATOR: As he says this, his mother feels that her chest will burst with grief.

HANGAKU: Ah! When your father said he was sending you here to perform a brave deed, what he really intended was for you to die in the place of Kinsato, the child of the previous shogun. He showed his true intentions through your cord of restraint. He cut into that cord without severing it completely, and neither was he able to kill you with his own sword. He wanted you to die alone. You, Egara's child? What nonsense! You were born to Lord Yoichi and myself – our truly, truly true child.¹⁶ If you die alone, it is for the sake of Lady Masako, to substitute for the young prince's life. It is a great deed – a magnificent deed! Please, die with good grace! By what karma were you born the son of a warrior?

NARRATOR: She explains her feelings and laments. Meanwhile, at the front of the building ...

YOICHI: Ichiwaka, your father has come! Grant him paradise in his final moments, oh blessed Amitabha Buddha.

NARRATOR: And did his prayerful heart carry across to his son? On the brink of death, Ichiwaka opens his eyes.

ICHIWAKA: In that case, I am not Egara's son? And my dying can be counted as a brave feat? I'm so happy for that, Mother! Farewell!

NARRATOR: He draws his last breath, tragically soon. All those outside and in burst into tears, fall to the floor, are beside themselves with sorrow.

Thinking that such grief must be the result of her husband's evil deeds, Tsunade seats herself, and it looks as though she is about to kill herself. Masako immediately tears the blade away from her.

MASAKO: If you have a truthful heart, seek out where your husband Egara, my daughter's murderer, has gone, and see that he is killed. As a prayer for Ichiwaka's soul, my heart will abandon its clinging to loving attachment, and I shall reinstate

16 I have attempted to reproduce the emotionally-driven repetition found in the original text.

Kinsato as a priest, that he might pray for the future lives of others.

NARRATOR: She cuts off the young prince's topknot.

MASAKO: Go with Tsunade and leave this house behind. Ask any kind of priest to be your master.

NARRATOR: She forsakes the young prince, who after becoming an adult would keep for his name the characters of Kinsato, while changing the pronunciation: the one who called himself Priest Kugyō was actually this small child.¹⁷

The night passes quickly, and dawn draws near. The battle cry sounds from the approaching troops. The tearful Hangaku has no choice but to decapitate her son's corpse, and hiding her sadness, she raises her voice.

HANGAKU: I have cut off the head of Egara's son, the one harboured by Lady Masako. Let the recipient come forth!

NARRATOR: When the gates are opened, Asari no Yoichi announces his presence, then wipes his tears away.

YOICHI: Oh, how beautifully you've succeeded. So here I am waiting, the one who is to take charge of the head of Ichiwakamaru.

NARRATOR: Even mentioning their child's name is a requiem for his soul.¹⁸ Lady Masako, finding the situation moving, chants a prayer. And there is a requiem from the young prince Zensaimaru, embarking on his journey of Buddhist law.

17 The same characters (公暁) may be read in a purely Japanese way as Kinsato, or in a Sino-Japanese way (suitable for a priest) as Kugyō. The historical Kugyō would later assassinate the shogun Sanetomo, thus bringing to an end the Minamoto line of shoguns. He was well-known for his eccentric behaviour. As Uchiyama Mikiko has indicated (1989), perhaps the author is implying that Ichiwaka's sacrifice has been for an unworthy cause.

18 The idea that simply mentioning the names of the dead could help them achieve rest in the afterlife is common in Japanese Buddhism. This same idea also underlies the existence of jōruri recitation – a sympathetic portrayal of historical characters would serve as a requiem for their troubled souls. This internal contradiction between jōruri theatre's Buddhist significance and its nature as commercial theatre contributes to jōruri's great interest and depth.

He leaves the residence together with Tsunade. Both parents behave with the greatest of ceremony – the one handing over her son’s head, the other receiving it.

YOICHI: Thank you for your great efforts! Thank you for your great efforts!

NARRATOR: His voice quavers and he weeps, but a decorous sleeve hides his tears. She clings to him, but he brushes her off. The pain of parting from loved ones: all who meet must part.¹⁹ Shaking her off in a necessary separation, he heads off back to his lord’s residence.

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19 A Buddhist phrase evoking the transience of life.