

*At the moment that Shunkan strikes Senoo's right shoulder with the short sword he has stolen,<sup>12</sup> two seagulls rise from behind the hut and fly off into the upper reaches of the stage. They are rigged on a wire that is almost invisible from the auditorium. Shunkan falls weakly near Chidori. A stage assistant enters to aid Senoo, who has fallen downstage of the rock. Senoo drops his fan and removes his sandals. He sits cross-legged as the assistant removes his outer jacket and drops his overkimono from his shoulders, revealing a yellow underkimono with a piece of red cloth sewn on the right shoulder to signify blood. The assistant removes the black lacquer cap from Senoo's topknot, revealing a bushy white topknot beneath. Senoo places his left hand on his right shoulder as if in pain.*

A SENOO RETAINER (*Appearing on the boat*): Hey! The exile is running riot!

ALL ON BOAT: Part them!

CHANTER:

Tanzaemon speaks amid the confusion.

*Tanzaemon appears on the boat with his retainers, who line up in a row behind him.*

TANZAEMON: Hold it! This is strictly their affair. Every detail of this quarrel between the exile and the envoy must be ascertained and reported to the authorities. No one must interfere on either of their behalfs!

SENOO: Wait, wait! What are you saying, Tanzaemon! Why do you side with this criminal and refuse to help me?

TANZAEMON: My duties extend only to the release of the exiles. I have no other duties. I am just a bystander here.<sup>13</sup>

SENOO: Well, let that be an end to it, then.

CHANTER:

Senoo, taken by surprise, rights himself and draws his other sword.

*Senoo draws his long sword and crawls toward Shunkan.*

He swings his sword as best he can  
but staggers like a willow on unsteady legs.

*The two opponents cross swords at the center, struggle to their feet, and fall down. They finally manage to rise with locked swords. They fight, and Shunkan falls.*

Shunkan totters like a withered pine.  
Pitting all their strength against each other,  
the two antagonists breathlessly face  
the moment of truth  
as they stagger to and fro  
on the strand.  
Unable to bear the strain,

12. Actors are divided on whether Shunkan should take Senoo's short sword or the long sword.

13. Tanzaemon justifies his actions using the same logic Senoo used earlier in the play. This is an example of ironic parroting (*ōmu*), a conventional device of kabuki actors, but it does not occur in Chikamatsu's original play for puppets.

Chidori, too, strikes out, but  
Shunkan's angry voice cuts in.

*Senoo is about to strike at the fallen man, but Chidori knocks over Senoo with her rake [figure 3.64].<sup>14</sup>*

SHUNKAN: Get away! Get away! I'll consider you my enemy if you so much as hand me a stick! If you interfere, I'll never forgive you!

CHANTER:

Startled by his harshness

Chidori withdraws her proffered aid.

*Chidori pouts and shuffles away.*

*Once again, Shunkan and Senoo cross swords. Then Chidori interferes and parts them with her rake.*

The weakened priest, bloody, worn from hunger,  
slashes out valiantly as he staggers  
and falters in the sand.

The heavy sword hangs loosely  
in his tired hands.

The flying sand clogs their lungs,  
and danger seems an equal threat to both.

*Senoo knocks down Shunkan and stands over him, about to kill his adversary.*

Finally, Senoo, used to looking down on men  
as though he were an eagle,  
is felled by a fatal blow

*Chidori tosses sand in Senoo's eyes. Blinded, he falters, and the fallen Shunkan thrusts home. Senoo grimaces and then falls slowly backward.*

as the pitiless waves  
beat here and there  
upon the shore.

As Shunkan raises his blade  
to give the coup de grâce

TANZAEMON: No! Wait a moment! You have clearly won the battle. It would be a mistake to give him the finishing blow. It would only increase the number of charges against you and invalidate your pardon. It is not worth the trouble.

SHUNKAN: It is all one with me, since I wish to remain on this island.

TANZAEMON: How can I let you? Leaving you behind would simply negate the kindness shown you by Lords Shigemori and Noto. It would also mar the

14. In other versions, she throws her apron over Senoo's head, tosses her basket in his face, or bites his hand.



FIGURE 3.64. Coming to Shunkan's aid, Chidori strikes Senoo with her rake. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)