

FIGURE 3.65. Shunkan prepares to kill Senoo, an act that will make it impossible for him to return to the capital but will allow Chidori to go in his place. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

thus become guilty of a new offense.

CHANTER:

I will once again become
an exile on Devil Island¹⁵

SHUNKAN:

and we'll pass beyond the bounds
of the great imperial amnesty.
Not a bit of blame
will fall to you.

He places his left hand on Senoo's breast to steady himself [figure 3.65].

CHANTER:

Making firm his heart,
Shunkan delivers the mortal blow.

SHUNKAN: Senoo! (Pause) Take for your sins

CHANTER: my vengeful sword!

Shunkan thrusts the sword into Senoo's throat; Senoo's arms and legs flail up for a moment and then lie still. The wooden clappers accent the movement. Five boatmen enter and remove the body, one taking the sword with him. Shunkan falls to his face weeping. Naritsune and Yasuyori run onstage aboard the boat and kneel at Tanzaemon's left.

All those on board
burst into tears.
Naritsune and Yasuyori
join their hands in prayer.

15. Some actors perform the Kan'u pose here. This pose has Shunkan thrusting the point of his sword into the ground, one foot extended, while gripping his beard in one hand. The pose is named after the famous Chinese general Kuan Yü and is borrowed from the play *The Battles of Coxinga*.

celebrations for the imperial infant. I would be held responsible for such an offense. Moreover, if we don't have three exiles on board, we will surely have difficulties with the inspectors at the checkpoint.

SHUNKAN: I understand, I understand. But if this girl boards with Yasuyori and Naritsune, there will be no discrepancy in the number of passengers, and you can't possibly have any trouble at the checkpoint. As for receiving the clemency of Lords Shigemori and Noto for my former offense, I will negate it by killing this envoy and

Chidori, hearing and seeing all that has transpired is overcome with grief.

CHIDORI:

Husband and wife will be together in the next world. Therefore, I will remain alone on this bitter island, never forgetting you. But I will not brazenly board the boat in your stead. Farewell everyone, farewell!

She tries to leave, but Shunkan holds her back. He is on his knees, and she sinks to her knees beside him.

SHUNKAN (Holding her left hand as she weeps): Wait a moment!

Listen to me. I have already passed through the three evil hells—the hell of hunger, the hell of battle—as you've just seen—and the hell of brimstone, which is always being burned on this island. I will surely be given salvation in the next world. The boat in which Shunkan will ride will be Buddha's noble craft bringing me to the shores of enlightenment.

CHANTER:

I have no desire to take a boat
back to the floating world.

SHUNKAN: Please leave me here and board the boat, quickly, quickly!

CHANTER:

He takes her by the sleeve,
pulls her by the hand,
and puts her on the royal boat.

Wave drum patterns. Chidori boards the boat and sits between Naritsune and Yasuyori.

Naritsune and his bride,
Yasuyori, too,

YASUYORI:

are loath to leave you,

NARITSUNE and YASUYORI:

Lord Shunkan.

TANZAEMON:

Keep up your spirits!

SHUNKAN (Standing at center stage, weakly): Farewell!

A boatman appears, unties the rope, and pulls up the gangplank.

CHANTER:

Farewell tears cloud their eyes.

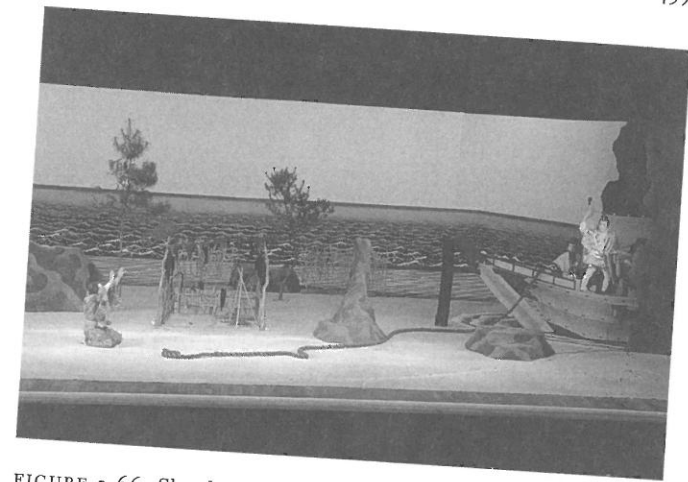


FIGURE 3.66. Shunkan and Tanzaemon raise their hands in farewell. In this production, the rope is stretched across the stage and then drawn up, reminiscent of the practice in noh. In other performances, it is stowed away immediately. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)