

FIGURE 3.67. The waves (ground cloths) pursue Shunkan as he starts to climb the peak. The revolving stage has begun to rotate, moving the rock to the foreground. Compare this with figure 3.56. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

into the offing.

Drum and shamisen music from the music room. Shunkan watches the ship depart, climbing a small rock to see it more clearly.

Soon, the ship is lost to sight.
Only a glimpse of it
can now and then be caught
beyond the rolling waves.
Though he is resolved to stay,
his heart, after all, is just
like yours or mine.

Shunkan goes to the front of the stage, waving and calling, "Farewell, farewell." The gray ground cloth on the rampway is removed, revealing a wave-patterned cloth covering half its length. Shunkan steps onto the rampway, and the wave cloth, pulled by unseen strings, moves toward the stage. When it comes to his feet, Shunkan stops (see figure 1.7). The waves pursue him, chasing him back to the stage where the ground cloths have also been whisked away to reveal waves. The revolving stage begins to move so that the large rock that was upstage right moves into the foreground [figure 3.67].

He climbs up to the highest point on the shore
and, waving, stretches his frame
as tall as he can,
then breaks down, weeping,
in the pure white sand.
Though he burns with longing
and shouts with despair,
not a soul is there to comfort him.

The rope is loosened,
and the oars emerge.
On board a fan is raised,
on shore a hand.

Tanzaemon opens his fan and slowly raises it aloft. Shunkan raises his hand in response. Naritsune, Yasuyori, and Chidori weep. The boat slowly begins to move off to the left [figure 3.66].

SHUNKAN: In the next life!

NARITSUNE and YASUYORI: In the next life!

CHANTER:

Their calls grow faint
as a heartless wind
fills out the sails
and pushes the boat
farther and farther

Only the cries of the gulls
and the wild geese flying
overhead
answer his lonely calls.
His only friends are the *chidori*,
the plovers, which he lures to
his side.
The tide rushes in to cut him off
from those
who have left him behind.

Shunkan struggles up the large rock as the stage continues to move until the rock is at stage center. He stumbles but clings to a vine of ivy. He turns to gaze off into the distance, holding the ivy over his shoulder, then pulls himself to the top. He comes up behind the small pine tree and strains for a glimpse of the boat through the branches. But Shunkan leans too heavily on a branch, and it suddenly snaps off. He falls forward, lifts his hands, waves, and calls "Ahoy! Ahoy!" [figure 3.68]

His sleeves are drenched
by his falling tears.

The rock moves forward, the lights dim, and Shunkan is in the spotlight. He stops calling, lowers his hand, and sinks down. All hope has fled as he becomes aware of his real loneliness. The final crack of the wooden clappers sounds. Wave drum patterns combine with the flute's plaintive notes as the curtain closes.

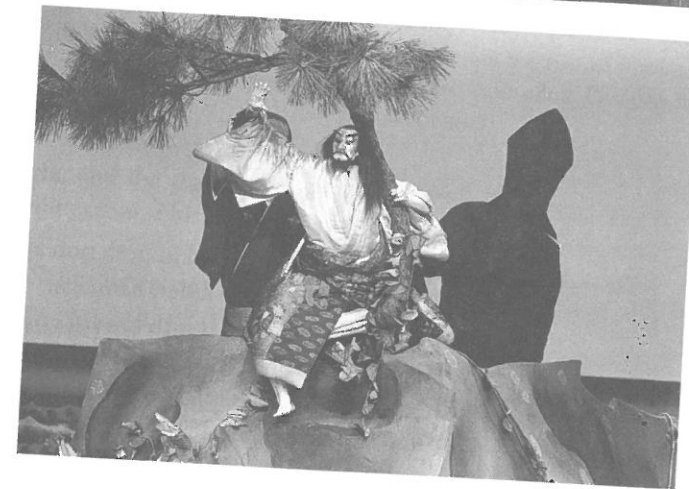


FIGURE 3.68. The kabuki and bunraku versions of Shunkan watching the ship disappear with the other exiles on it. Shunkan is on the top of the rock, which has now been turned to face the audience. The specialized puppet head is called Shunkan. (Photos by Aoki Shinji.)