

CHARACTERS

SHUNKAN: an exiled priest

YASUYORI: the exiled lord of Hei

NARITSUNE: the exiled lord of Tamba, a member of

CHIDORI: an island diving girl

SENOO TARŌ KANEYASU: a Heike warrior serving as

TANZAEMON MOTOYASU: an envoy from Taira Shige
Retainers and boatmen

MUSICIANS

A gidayū chanter and a shamisen player seated on a p
Music-room (geza) musicians, including noh and n

ACT 2

The Scene on Devil Island

*After the wooden clackers are struck at quickening in
noh flute and drums play issei music. Then a large d
the clackers strike faster and faster as the striped curt
light blue drop curtain covering the entire width of t
passage, the chanter begins his recitative.*

CHANTER:

From time immemorial
this island's fearful name
has been Kikaigashima
—Devil Island—
a place where demons live.
It is indeed a hell on earth.

*The wave drum patterns sound loudly in the music r
strikes, and the blue curtain suddenly falls, revealing
exiles' island [figure 3.56].*

The only things to remind one
of bygone days in the capital
are the sun and moon
shining in the sky.

*More wave drum patterns as Shunkan enters slowly
movements suggesting weakness and despondency.¹*

1. Some actors prefer to be seated in the hut when the curta
rampway or from stage left. A method no longer practiced was t
stage center.

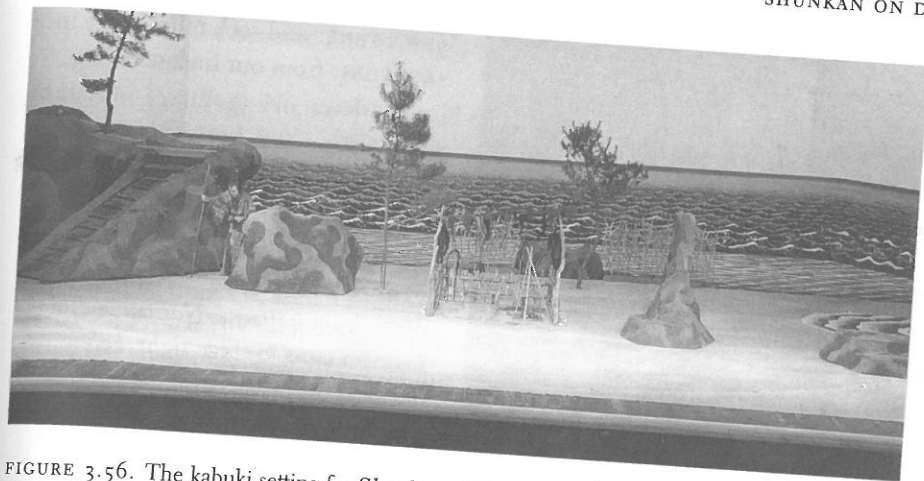


FIGURE 3.56. The kabuki setting for *Shunkan at Devil Island*. Shunkan's ramshackle hut has a makeshift tripod fire in it. Gray and wave-patterned ground cloths mark land and water. Shunkan enters between the rocks at stage right. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

Shunkan, the exiled priest,
 having exchanged some sulfur
 from the mountaintop
 for a fisherman's meager haul,
 comes stumbling, tottering,
 staggering along
 with his wretched, scraggly walking stick;
 he is surely a sight to be pitied.

Shunkan crosses to the right of the hut, leans his staff there, removes his sandals, enters the hut, and kneels, exhausted. He takes the seaweed from the ring, puts it in an abalone shell that he takes from the wall, and fans the embers beneath the shell with a palm leaf until a red glow appears.² He busies himself with his cooking as Yasuyori and Naritsune move down the rampway.³

The same may be said of Yasuyori, lord of Hei,
 bedecked in rotting rags,
 and of Naritsune, lord of Tamba,
 who come walking along the sandy beach.

Naritsune, played in the soft, romantic wagoto style, turns to address his friend [figure 3.57].

NARITSUNE: Lord Yasuyori! I can see Lord Shunkan sitting in his hut.
Yasuyori is less a wagoto type than Naritsune is, although Yasuyori speaks and moves with definite grace and refinement.

YASUYORI: Fortunately, the weather today is fine so we can gather at our ease

2. A long soliloquy in which Shunkan laments his life in exile is usually omitted (as is it here), although the Zenshin troupe has restored it in its production.

3. Two rampways are sometimes used, with Naritsune entering on the permanent one and Yasuyori along the temporary rampway. In this case they engage in a dialogue from the rampways, with Shunkan on the stage, and the words coming from three separated sections of the theater create an interesting effect.