



FIGURE 3.57. Yasuyori (left) and Naritsune, dressed in patched kimonos, enter down the rampway to the seven-three position. The trapdoor (*suppon*) can be seen beneath their feet. Naritsune's makeup is lighter than that of his fellow exiles, and his movements are in the soft *wagoto* style. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

Welcome. Come, come!

Although glad to see his friends, Shunkan has barely enough strength to rise and greet them.

CHANTER:

Though his means are scanty,
his welcome is sincere,
showing how truly close
their friendship is.

Naritsune and Yasuyori put their baskets on the ground to the right of the hut, and a stage assistant removes them. Shunkan rises slowly, moves down to the left of the hut, sits, and gestures to them to sit down.

YASUYORI: Well, well! We haven't met together recently, so I hope things are well with you.

NARITSUNE: It's been at least four or five days since we last met; we've missed you a great deal.

SHUNKAN: My friends, Lord Yasuyori and Lord Naritsune, although we usually are together, it has been some time since I heard anything of either of you.

He slowly lifts his right hand to his eyes and mimes weeping.

YASUYORI: It is only natural for you to be upset, but let me explain. Together with Naritsune I have been praying daily to the gods of the three shrines of Kumano and simply have not had time to visit you.

The shamisen in the music room begins to play background music.

NARITSUNE: As Yasuyori has said, we have been praying every day that we may be granted a pardon from the capital that will let us return to our loved ones there.

YASUYORI: Therefore, we have had no occasion to get in touch with you. (*Both bow low*) But leaving that aside, what you still don't know, Lord Shunkan, is that we three friends have recently become four.

NARITSUNE: and seek relief

YASUYORI: from our melancholy burdens.

CHANTER:

Friends to the waves that
lap at the lonely house
are the plovers, circling o'er the
crests.

Wave drum patterns. Naritsune and Yasuyori cross to stage right, below the rocks.

NARITSUNE: Fortunately, Lord Shunkan

YASUYORI: may be found

BOTH: at home.

SHUNKAN (*Noticing them*): Ah! Lord Naritsune! Lord Yasuyori!

SHUNKAN: We've become four? Do you mean another exile from the capital has joined us?

YASUYORI (*Smiling*): No, no! Not at all! Lord Naritsune has fallen in love with a charming island diving girl and has taken her for his wife.

Naritsune makes an expression of bashfulness.

SHUNKAN (*Coming to life a bit*): He has? Wonderful, wonderful! Do you know this is the first time in three years any of us has uttered the word *love*? It also is the first time I've seen a smiling face. It reminds me of the love affair of the fabled Prince Yukihiro, who fell in love with a fishergirl at Suma Beach.⁴ I myself constantly long for my darling wife, Azumaya, whom I had to leave behind in the capital. Although she is my wife, it is as though she were my lover. So not only is the speaker in love, you see, but so is his listener. I beg you, then, to tell me your story.

CHANTER:

Implored to tell his tale
the Lord of Tamba's face reddens.

NARITSUNE (*Embarrassed*): The three of us share the same lot so there is no reason to conceal anything from one another. Thus I will tell you the story of my love for the humble diving girl, the vessel of all my delights.

CHANTER:

Though it embarrasses me to say—

NARITSUNE: the girl I love is named Chidori. She is the daughter of a Kiri Island fisherman and works on the beach wearing a sea-stained robe, gathering in the seawater and drying it for its salt.

CHANTER:

When the tide is right,
she reveals her lovely body

Naritsune mimes the words of the narration. Rising on his right knee, he points off into the distance and slowly folds his arms across his body as if bashfully hiding his nakedness.

NARITSUNE:

as she takes a bucket and scythe

CHANTER:

and plunges into the bottomless depths
to gather many kinds of seaweed,
too busy even to keep her hair back with
a boxwood comb.

Naritsune mimes cutting seaweed and combing his hair.

NARITSUNE: In no time at all, the god of marriage swept down on this very island and caused us to fall in love. We are now living as man and wife in my humble cottage. Chidori has only the deepest feelings of devotion and love for me. She told me, in her charming island accent, that she is overwhelmed with gratitude

4. Ariwara no Yukihiro (818–893?) was exiled to Suma, where he is said to have fallen in love. In the *noh* play *Matsukaze*, two local women love Yukihiro.