



FIGURE 3.59. Yasuyori uses a bamboo tube to pour “wine” into Chidori’s abalone-shell wine cup, with Naritsune (right) and Shunkan awaiting their turns to drink in celebration of the wedding of Chidori and Naritsune. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

CHANTER:

Thoughts of their sulfur-belching island fade
as their hearts drift to an enchanted world of make-believe.

The following is from a traditional wedding ceremony dance and song performed in noh style. It is derived from the play Shōjō. The movements are stately and ceremonious and the chanting deep and sonorous, although of course, the emaciated Shunkan can barely move or speak with any vigor. He begins to chant as he rises on his right knee, stumbles slightly, and with sliding steps moves slightly downstage.

SHUNKAN:

They revel in the never-ceasing flow of wine
from the inexhaustible wine fount.

He holds the branch out to the right, stumbles a step forward, raises the branch high, and then falls down on his back. He laughs delightedly, and the others laugh too and then bow low.

CHANTER:

They all make merry.

Laughing, Yasuyori happens to look off into the distance.

YASUYORI: My god! There’s a large boat out there. I’ve never seen it before. It’s headed in this direction.

Shunkan shields his eyes with both hands as he looks off. All rise on their knees, looking off.

NARITSUNE: Maybe it’s another exile.

7. Actors use a branch of *yatsude* (eight-fingered plant) or a tattered noh-style fan (*chūkei*) to perform the following dance. The Zenshin troupe replaces this dance with a lively one by Yasuyori using the bamboo tube and abalone shell.

from the tube [figure 3.59], and she drinks it bashfully. She hands the cup to Naritsune, who also drinks. Yasuyori then takes the shell to Shunkan and pours for him.

CHANTER:

The abalone shell is a cup of lapis lazuli

as they pretend to be drinking wine.

The three—no—four friends celebrate the nuptials.

Yasuyori gives a stage assistant the bamboo tube and abalone shell.

SHUNKAN: I will whet your appetites.

He nods to each side, picks up the pine branch lying nearby, and dusts it off on his hand and knee.⁷



FIGURE 3.60. The three exiles and Chidori join hands as they watch the boat approaching their island. They follow an imaginary boat moving across the back and right side of the auditorium until a “real” boat appears at the back of the stage. (Photo by Aoki Shinji.)

SHUNKAN: No, no! Its sails are spread, and you can clearly see it’s a ship from the capital.

YASUYORI: Look, look! It’s coming closer and closer!

NARITSUNE: There’s no doubt it’s an official ship from the capital!

SHUNKAN: It’s surely a reception boat!

CHIDORI: Look, look! It’s almost here!

They form a tight group, and moving as a unit, they cross near the farthest downstage rock as if looking at the boat [figure 3.60]. They point to it and then go behind the rock and crouch there, out of sight, as a miniature boat moves slowly across the backdrop from right to left.⁸ This is accompanied by drum music.

CHANTER:

As they chatter in excitement,
a Kyoto government ship
makes its berth at the shore.

Several seconds after the miniature boat passes off to the left, the prow of a large wooden boat moves onstage from the wings at left. Only the prow is visible, but the impression is of the entire boat’s presence [see figure 1.8]. As the boat rolls to a stop, five or six boatmen appear on the prow. One jumps off and ties the ship’s thick rope to a rock. Several others lay a gangplank down to a rock and descend. They sit cross-legged at upstage right.

CHANTER:

The boat’s anchor is dropped
at the dry and sandy beach.

A VOICE (Offstage): We have arrived at Devil Island.

VOICES (Offstage): At last!

CHANTER:

The Heike samurai Senoo Tarō Kaneyasu
descends from the boat
and calmly walks along the beach.

Senoo walks down the plank to the shore, followed by four men who stand in a row before the boatmen [figure 3.61].

SENOO (Bellowing): Hear ye! Hear ye! Are the exiles Naritsune, lord of Tamba, and Yasuyori, lord of Hei, sent here three years ago, present?

Senoo’s four samurai sit on their haunches.

NARITSUNE (As he appears from behind the rock): I am Naritsune.

8. A variant no longer used was to have a small boat appear out in the audience, moving along the edge of the balcony seats.