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# *Kanadehon Hamlet: A Play* by Tsutsumi Harue

*Translated by Faubion Bowers with  
David W. Griffith and Hori Mariko  
Introduced by Tsutsumi Harue*

*In the spring of 1997, the editor of ATJ witnessed a production of this play at New York's La MaMa E.T.C. and was immediately interested in publishing it. The play is interesting on several levels: it has a strong dramatic action, concerns an important problem in the transition of Japanese drama from traditional forms to modern ones, reveals the kind of serious misunderstandings that occur when cultures collide, allows for exciting "fusion" scenes in which Shakespeare is produced kabuki-style, and brings to the stage several real-life kabuki figures, notably Morita Kan'ya XII, the progressive Meiji-era producer. The playwright also makes an interesting case for explaining Shakespeare's Hamlet to the kabuki company when, as suggested by her title, she uses the Japanese classic Kanadehon Chūshingura as a point of comparison.*

*Tsutsumi Harue is a doctoral student in East Asian languages and cultures at Indiana University. As a student of theatre history in the master's degree program at Osaka University, she studied under the distinguished playwright and scholar Yamazaki Masakazu. She was interested in playwriting as well as in the comparative natures of traditional Japanese and Western drama. When she subsequently moved from Japan to the United States she was prompted to focus on the clash between the two cultures. Her four full-length plays are Kanadehon Hamuretto (Kanadehon Hamlet), Rokumeikan Ibun (Strange Tales of the Rokumeikan), Tsukiji Hoterukan Enjō (The Burning of the Tsukiji Hotel), and Seigeki Osero (Othello in Japan), as well as two one-act plays.*

*Faubion Bowers, the chief translator, is one of the best-known Western authorities on Japanese theatre. His books include Japanese Theatre (1952) and Theatre in the East (1956).*

*Kanadehon Hamlet* (Kanadehon Hamuretto) is a play about a troupe of nineteenth-century *kabuki* actors struggling to stage a strange foreign play called *Hamlet*.<sup>1</sup> It was published in 1993 by Bungei Shunju together with the author's first play, *Rokumeikan Ibun* (Strange Tales of the Rokumeikan).<sup>2</sup> *Kanadehon* refers to one of the most famous and popular *kabuki* plays, *Kanadehon Chūshingura* (The Treasury of Loyal Retain-

ers), written in 1748 by Takeda Izumo, Miyoshi Shōraku, and Namiki Senryū.<sup>3</sup> It was first produced in 1748 by the puppet theatre and almost immediately was adapted to the *kabuki* stage. Based on an actual 1703 revenge on their master's enemy by forty-seven retainers, the play was the most commonly produced by *kabuki* in the Edo period (1600–1868). It still captures the imagination of the Japanese populace as one of the best-known *kabuki* plays and is a source for numerous movies and TV programs. In *Kanadehon Hamlet*, *Kanadehon Chūshingura* is presented as the prototype of *kabuki*—a melodrama full of noble samurai, passionate self-sacrificing beauties, and diabolical villains. Together with *Hamlet*, which represents Western drama, this play becomes a mirror reflecting the differences and similarities between Japanese and Western drama.

Although *Hamlet*, a Shakespearean tragedy, and *Chūshingura*, a *kabuki* melodrama, belong to two distinctively different genres, *Kanadehon Hamlet*'s basic plot is developed on the assumption that *Hamlet* and *Chūshingura* could be produced by the same set of actors in the same company. As revenge plays, both *Hamlet* and *Chūshingura* have an avenger-protagonist: Hamlet, princely son of the slain king, and Ōboshi Yuranosuke, chief retainer of Enya Hangan, a feudal lord forced to commit suicide for having drawn his sword and attacked an official within the palace precincts. Both avengers devise a means to conceal their true intent from the villains: Hamlet fakes madness whereas Yuranosuke pretends to indulge in geisha parties. The villains, Claudius and Kōno Moronao, are both corrupt old men who are attracted to the victims' beautiful wives. Their attraction is one reason why the victims are killed or forced to commit suicide. Moreover, the plays' minor villains, Polonius and Ono Kudayū, bear striking similarities. They begin as retainers of the victims—Polonius of the former king and Kudayū of Enya Hangan—but after the deaths of the victims they side with the villains, Claudius and Moronao. Both are killed by the protagonists while hiding as spies: Polonius is stabbed by Hamlet while eavesdropping on his conversation with his mother; Kudayū is stabbed by Yuranosuke as he hides under the floor of a Kyoto teahouse, trying to read Yuranosuke's confidential letter.

Although the attempted production of *Hamlet* by a *kabuki* troupe is imaginary,<sup>4</sup> Morita Kan'ya XII, the play's central figure and the producer who leads the troupe, is an actual figure (1846–1897).<sup>5</sup> As a producer, Morita Kan'ya was extremely ingenious, innovative, and imaginative; he most certainly would have produced Shakespeare if he had ever had the chance. Kan'ya was born into a family that owned the Morita-za, one of Edo's three legitimate *kabuki* theatres, for over two hundred years. At the age of eighteen, he inherited the title of *zamoto*,

the hereditary position of theatre manager. Not long after, in 1868, the Meiji Restoration took place and the social system that had supported *kabuki* for over two and a half centuries, under the Tokugawa shogunate, collapsed. Kan'ya tried his best to accommodate the Meiji government's new policy of vigorous westernization.<sup>6</sup> He welcomed instructions from the government and tried to stage refined, historically accurate plays in order to educate the public. Kan'ya designed his new theatre, the Shintomi-za, with great care. To attract audiences of "illustrious Japanese and foreigners," he installed chairs. He abolished the *yagura*, a drum tower built over the entrance to the theatre buildings and highly respected as a traditional symbol of Tokugawa-era *kabuki*. Instead, Kan'ya installed gaslights both inside and out, marking a revolutionary change in Japanese theatre, which previously had relied solely on sunlight whose intensity was regulated by the manipulation of special windows. Rapidly the Shintomi-za became the most prestigious theatre in Tokyo. Employing the best *kabuki* actors, including Ichikawa Danjūrō IX and Onoe Kikugorō V, and working closely with the leading playwright, Kawatake Mokuami, Kan'ya established a golden epoch of Meiji *kabuki*.

Kan'ya's production that stimulated the basic idea of *Kanadehon Hamlet* took place in 1879, when his frantic attempt to westernize *kabuki* reached its height. He staged an adaptation of an English play, *Ningen Banji Kane no Yononaka* (The Omnipresence of Money in Men's Affairs), based on Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Money*. He also staged three operettas, *La Grand-Duchess de Gerolstein* by Offenbach, *The Daughter of the Regiment* by Donizetti, and *La Fille de Madame Angot* by A. C. Lecocq, all as plays-within-a-*kabuki*-play called *Hyōryū Kidan Seiyō Kabuki* (The Wanderer's Strange Story: A Foreign *Kabuki*). The operettas were produced by a Western traveling troupe, but Japanese audiences did not react favorably to the unfamiliar Western acting style. Unable to tolerate the prima donna's operatic singing, the audience laughed and hissed mercilessly whenever the poor soprano trilled her high notes.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, financial difficulty forced Kan'ya to sell his Shintomi-za. He also had to give up his best actors, Danjūrō and Kikugorō, who moved to the newly built Kabuki-za (1889). Nevertheless, Kan'ya was active as a producer until his death in 1897.

Other historical figures among the characters in *Kanadehon Hamlet* are Sawamura Gennosuke IV (1859–1936) and Okamoto Kidō (1872–1939). Sawamura Gennosuke was a beautiful young *onnagata* who appeared in Kan'ya's productions until 1903, when he moved to *koshibai*, or small theatres, considered to be second- or third-class theatres in contrast to first-class theatres like the Shintomi-za. Eventually he became a star of the *koshibai* by playing roles of evil women of the

decadent nineteenth-century Edo period. Throughout his career, Gennosuke strove to preserve the quality of the Edo-period *onnagata*. Okamoto Kidō (1872–1939) started his career as a drama critic for a newspaper. Later he became a playwright who developed *shinkabuki*, which combined the nostalgic mood of traditional *kabuki* with modern elements of *shingeki*.<sup>8</sup> He is best known for the plays he wrote for Ichikawa Sadanji II: *Shuzenji Monogatari* (Shuzenji Story) and *Toribeyama Shinjū* (Love Suicide in Toribeyama).

Although most other characters in *Kanadehon Hamlet* are imaginary, some were inspired by actual figures. The models for Takigawa Tokujirō and Takigawa Shichō are Nakamura Shikan IV (1830–1899), one of the leading actors of the late Edo and early Meiji periods (1868–1912), and his adopted son, Nakamura Fucusuke IV, who eventually became the greatest *onnagata* of prewar *kabuki*, Nakamura Utaemon V (1866–1940). The acting style and personality of Nakayama Umematsu are inspired by Onoe Matsusuke IV (1843–1928), who was considered the best supporting actor in the later Meiji period. Tome, an old stagehand at the Shintomi-za, with his hair in a topknot, is modeled after a legendary dresser who had a topknot and supported Onoe Kikugorō V throughout his life.

*Kanadehon Hamlet* depicts Kan'ya's company during their last dress rehearsal. It is set in 1897, the year of Kan'ya's actual death, because, in the world of Meiji *kabuki*, Morita Kan'ya was himself a Hamlet, a prince who became a stranger in his own kingdom. With the advent of the Meiji Restoration, the government stopped persecuting *kabuki* as a necessary evil and started to use it as a means of educating the public. Kan'ya had to adjust to these changes and, unlike the Prince of Denmark, he tried to take advantage of the situation by aggressively westernizing *kabuki*. In the process, Kan'ya became the one to draw the curtain on Edo *kabuki*, the *kabuki* of the "good old days," old-fashioned but more concerned with theatrical pleasure than educational reform. Therefore he was a Hamlet and, at the same time, a Claudius. In the play, Kan'ya tries to produce Hamlet by relying on younger actors, Ichikawa Shinzō and Takigawa Shichō, who are capable of adjusting themselves to the westernized acting style. By doing so, he is criticized by Gennosuke, who is faithful to the traditional *kabuki* of the late Edo period. Ironically it is the old-fashioned actors and the old stagehand still wearing his topknot who support Kan'ya in his financial crisis. In the middle of the rehearsal, it becomes apparent that the Shintomi-za has been secretly sold to a shrewd producer from Osaka, Horitani Bunjirō, a counterpart of Fortinbras. The play closes when Kan'ya collapses, speaking Hamlet's dying words: "You that look pale and tremble at this chance—the rest is silence." Kidō's speech, "Good

night, sweet prince . . .,” suggests this future playwright is Horatio, whose role would be to report Kan’ya’s achievements to later generations. Although Kidō accuses Kan’ya of blindly obeying the Meiji government’s policy of westernization, he still considers Kan’ya to be a great producer, a hero who deserves a Hamlet’s death.

*Kanadehon Hamlet* was first produced in 1992. The second and third productions were held in 1994 and 1997. The 1997 production in Tokyo was followed by a tour to New York at La MaMa E.T.C., in association with Inter-Arts N.Y., led by Noriko Sengoku, and JUSPPA. All productions were presented by Kiyama Theatre Productions, led by Kiyama Kiyoshi, who originally commissioned the play. The director, Sueki Toshifumi, is from a *shingeki* (modern theatre) background but has worked with *kabuki* actors and is experienced in dealing with the two different acting styles. When he directed Yamazaki Masakazu’s *Zeami* in 1987, he worked with a leading *kabuki* actor, Matsumoto Kōshirō IX, who played the central character, Zeami Motokiyo, the great *nō* actor-dramatist of the fourteenth century. He also directed *Hamlet* twice, in 1987 and 1989, casting a young *kabuki* actor, Ichikawa Somegorō VII (son of Kōshirō IX), in the central role. During the rehearsal for the first production of *Kanadehon Hamlet*, Sueki began to assume a role similar to that of Kan’ya in the play. All the actors had a *shingeki* background and many had played Shakespearean roles, but none had experience with *kabuki*. Those who had some knowledge and skill in traditional Japanese dramatic forms, such as *nō* and *kyōgen*, were comfortable playing the roles of *kabuki* actors. Some of the others were uncomfortable mixing two acting styles, *kabuki* and *shingeki*. With the support of choreographer Nebuya Shōzan, a master of Japanese dance, Sueki gradually succeeded in transforming a group of modern actors into a nineteenth-century *kabuki* troupe. “The Murder of Gonzago,” the play-within-a-play-within-a-rehearsal-within-a-play, was produced with *kabuki*-style acting, costume, makeup, and music. Set designer Ishii Mitsuru, by building *sajiki* (gallery-style) seats around the stage and using part of them as a performing space for the actors, recaptured the atmosphere of an old *kabuki* theatre in which life on stage and life in the auditorium merged. His use of bright red lanterns framing the stage intensified the notion of theatre as a dream, emphasizing the metatheatrical nature of the play.

Critics were interested that the parallelism between the two masterpieces, *Hamlet* and *Chūshingura*, was used to reflect differences between East and West. Takahashi Yasunari, a scholar of English literature and translator of Lionel Abel’s *Metatheatre*, pointed out that *Kanadehon Hamlet* is constructed in such a way that the two underlying plots—turning a Shakespearean drama into *kabuki* and vice versa—

are occasionally revealed (Takahashi 1992). An American critic, Deborah Jowitt, found it amusing that Shinzō, a young *kabuki* actor assuming the role of Hamlet, fails to get Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy right and finally turns the speech into a dance, complete with a *kabuki*-style *mie* (Jowitt 1997). At La MaMa, the audience's laughter reached its peak when an older *kabuki* actor, Umematsu, innocently suggests that they should omit the soliloquy altogether (Ōsasa 1997; Iwanami 1997). Matsuoka Kazuko states: "The audience at La MaMa gave this . . . extraordinary marriage . . . between *Kanadehon* and *Hamlet* their blessing" (Matsuoka 1997).

*Hamlet*, one of the most famous plays in the world, has been a constant source for parodies and adaptations in the West. Likewise, Japanese playwrights continue to create new versions of *Chūshingura*, not only for *kabuki*<sup>9</sup> and *shingeki*,<sup>10</sup> but for movies and TV as well. *Kanadehon Hamlet* is unique in that it joins these two traditions. By doing so, it bridges two distinctively different styles of drama and, in turn, the two cultures from which they were born.

## KANADEHON HAMLET

### CAST

#### *Actors in the company*

ICHIKAWA SHINZŌ (*Narita-ya*)<sup>11</sup> /HAMLET  
 NAKAJIMA HANJŪRŌ (*Nakajima-ya*)/GHOST  
 TAKIGAWA TOKUJIRŌ (*Hōrai-ya*)/CLAUDIUS  
 SAWAMURA GENNOSUKE (*Kinokuni-ya*)/HORATIO  
 NAKAYAMA UMEMATSU (*Izumi-ya*)/POLONIUS  
 YOSHIZAWA KAKŌ (*Yoshizawa-ya*)/GERTRUDE  
 TAKIGAWA SHICHŌ (*Waka-Hōrai*)/OPHELIA  
 PLAYERS, *actors in HAMLET's "play-within-a-play"*

#### *Other characters*

MORITA KAN'YA, *a theatre manager/producer*  
 MIYAUCHI REINOJŌ, *a baron who serves as HAMLET's director*  
 OLD TOME, *an old stagehand*  
 OKAMOTO KIDŌ, *a journalist/drama critic*  
 CLERK, *an employee of Nishigami, a loan shark*  
 HORITANI BUNJIRŌ, *a producer from Osaka*

### ACT I

*(On the dark stage a spotlight picks up ICHIKAWA SHINZŌ/HAMLET and NAKAJIMA HANJŪRŌ/GHOST, who enter from the right, the latter*

*leading the way. SHINZŌ/HAMLET's cropped hair is slicked back and he wears a frock coat with trousers and shoes. He carries a Japanese sword, a kabuki prop, in his hand. He holds the sword out cautiously, as if keeping HANJŪRŌ/GHOST at bay. All the movement and speeches in this and subsequent scenes from HAMLET reflect kabuki conventions. Thus HANJŪRŌ/GHOST moves with the sliding steps typical of kabuki spectres. His whitish costume resembles that worn by ENYA HANGAN in the seppuku scene of Chūshingura—that is, hakama trousers, kimono, and kata-ginu winged vest. His wig's topknot has been undone and the hair hangs to his shoulders. Eerie music of drums and flutes is heard.) (See Color Plate 2.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak, I'll go no further.

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST: Mark me.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: I will.

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

My hour is almost come.  
When I to sulph'rous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Poor ghost.

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Speak, I am bound to hear.

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST: So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: What?

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to sleep in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,  
And each particular hair to stand an end  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.  
List, O list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: O God!

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST: Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Murder!

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

Murder most foul, as in the best it is,  
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

Haste me to know't, that I with wings as swift  
As meditation or the thought of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

I find thee apt,  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me—  
But know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: My uncle!

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—  
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen.  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!

*(Eerie drums and flute are heard again, fading out at the end of this speech.)*

But soft, methinks I scent the morning air.  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of mine ears did pour  
The leperous distilment whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body;  
So did it mine,

And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
 Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
 All my smooth body.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: O horrible!

HANJŪRŌ/GHOST:

If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.  
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
 But howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
 Against thy mother aught. Leave her to heaven  
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge  
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
 The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.  
 Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*(Exit HANJŪRŌ/GHOST upstage center.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?  
 And shall I couple hell? Hold, hold, my heart;  
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,  
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!  
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
 In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
 Yea, from the tablet of my memory  
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past  
 That youth and observation copied there,  
 And thy commandment all alone shall live  
 Within the book and volume of my brain,  
 Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!  
 O most pernicious woman!  
 O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
 Now to my word; I have sworn't.

*(As SHINZŌ/HAMLET concludes he strikes a mie pose to the crack of wooden clappers. The stage suddenly lights up to reveal the interior of the Shintomi-za in Tokyo, June 1897. The stage for the Shintomi-za is surrounded by sajiki-style seats for the audience. A red felt curtain with gold letters, donated by General Grant, ex-president of the United States, covers half of the set. Ever since its founding in 1872, the Shintomi-za had been*

most fashionable; now it is in ruinous condition through age and lack of financial support. Though an attempt is made to conceal this deterioration, basins and buckets for collecting rainwater leaking from the roof reveal the true condition of the theatre. The Chinese characters for *Shintomi-za*, usually lighted by gas, which MORITA KAN'YA was proud of, cannot be easily seen, as they are no longer lighted. Baron MIYAUCHI REINOJŌ, thirty-five, who looks wealthy in his fashionable European suit and shiny leather shoes, walks nervously about the stage. ICHIKAWA SHINZŌ/HAMLET, thirty-five, and NAKAJIMA HANJŪRŌ/GHOST, forty, kneel respectfully in front of MIYAUCHI. TAKIGAWA TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS, an actor of sixty-two, is a man of fine appearance, looking as if he stepped out of a woodblock print of the Edo period. Wearing a bowler and cloak over an ill-fitting suit, he sits awkwardly on a "throne" set on a raised upstage platform. SAWAMURA GENNOSUKE, thirty-eight, in a smart-looking suit, remains a spectator with a sardonic smile. NAKAYAMA UMEMATSU, fifty-one, dressed in black, formal Japanese attire of kimono and hakama, sits on the stage, his face turned away but his eyes sharply on SHINZŌ/HAMLET and MIYAUCHI. TAKIGAWA SHICHŌ/OPHELIA, onnagata, twenty-seven, dressed in a sparkling white gown of Victorian style and a pink ribbon on his wig, stands close to SHINZŌ/HAMLET with a certain feminine charm, as if he were a real lady. YOSHIZAWA KAKŌ, seventy, an onnagata, sits hidden in a prop palanquin upstage left.)

MIYAUCHI: (*Bitterly.*) What in God's name? Tomorrow at last, for the first time in our country, we put on Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*. Today's rehearsal is vital. Why on earth those costumes?

SHINZŌ: Sorry, Baron.

MIYAUCHI: Shinzō! I had your costume—black velvet doublet, black fur cloak, silver sword—just like the famous Hamlet actor Edwin Booth I saw in America—I had it copied for today's rehearsal.

SHINZŌ: Yesterday it was delivered, but . . .

MIYAUCHI: At least you're in Western clothes, as befits the head of the troupe. Hanjūrō! Your role is a king's ghost. Where's your European armor and helmet for God's sake? You're like something out of the past!

HANJŪRŌ: They are death clothes for *Chūshingura*, Act 4, Lord Enya Hangan's seppuku scene . . .

MIYAUCHI: *Chūshingura*?

SHINZŌ: Baron, our troupe has been touring since spring in *Chūshingura*. I was Yuranosuke. Hanjūrō played two handsome roles, Enya Hangan and Kampei.

HANJŪRŌ: Enya Hangan, lord of the clan, was provoked by Moronao into violating protocol and unsheathing his sword inside the palace

and is ordered to commit seppuku. As he dies he tells his chief retainer, Yuranosuke, to take revenge. In *Hamlet's* Act 1, the King of Denmark's ghost makes his son Hamlet swear revenge. Aren't they more or less the same?

MIYAUCHI: How dare you compare old-fashioned *Chūshingura* with Shakespeare's masterpiece!

HANJŪRŌ: I came to the dressing room today in my only Western clothes, but they didn't feel right. So when I saw the suicide clothes of Enya Hangan I'm used to in the wardrobe, I realized how similar the roles are.

MIYAUCHI: How can we rehearse sacred Shakespeare in costumes from an outmoded play? Go change! (HANJŪRŌ rises and exits right.) Claudius! Where's your king's cloak? Lord Chamberlain Polonius! Where's your costume? What on earth . . .

UMEMATSU: The *Chūshingura* costumes are all in the dressing rooms . . .

MIYAUCHI: We are not putting on *Chūshingura*, that relic of the past. *Hamlet* is new theatre, being put on for the first time in "new" Japan. While I was in America I saw the great actor, Edwin Booth,

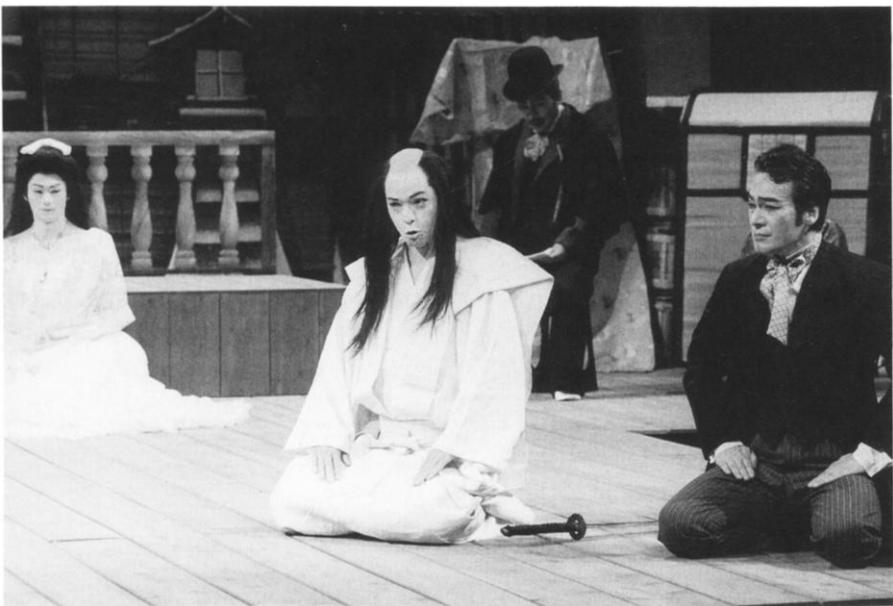


FIGURE 6. "HANJŪRŌ: Aren't they more or less the same?" Left to right: Shichō (Isogai Makoto), Hanjūrō (Murakami Hiroshi), Tokujirō (Kubo Kōichi), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1994, Tōkyō Globe-za. (All photos courtesy of Kiyama Theatre Productions)

at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in his last performance of his finest role, Hamlet. Ever since, I've dreamed of *Hamlet* here. I got Waseda University Professor Tsubouchi Shōyō to translate it magnificently. And the number one owner/actor/manager of the Shintomi-za, Morita Kan'ya, is producing it. Tomorrow's *Hamlet* will be the most memorable event in Japan's theatre history. . . . Only Shichō is properly costumed. Where's our Gertrude, Takinojō?

SHICHŌ: I had old Tome, our chief stagehand, go to Kiyotaki-ya (Takinojō)'s house. He'll be back soon.

GENNOSUKE: I thought Narita-ya Shinzō was the head of our troupe. Shichō, when did you take over?

SHICHŌ: I'm new to the troupe, of course, for *Hamlet*. I came early with my father, Tokujirō, because I'm not used to Western clothes. I needed to get used to my costume. There was a message that Kiyotaki-ya (Takinojō) had withdrawn as Queen. Narita-ya (Shinzō) was busy going over Hamlet's lines. Morita Kan'ya was at home ill. So the baron asked me to send someone to Kiyotaki-ya. I sent old Tome. This was natural . . . wasn't it?

MIYAUCHI: Claudius! . . . Tokujirō! Your makeup! Why have you plastered your face?

TOKUJIRŌ: *Kabuki* villains all make up this way.

MIYAUCHI: True, King Claudius is an evil man, but in this Castle Scene he hides his true nature. He's noble. A *kabuki* stereotype of a villain is different.

TOKUJIRŌ: But in *Chūshingura*, Moronao must be seen as evil from Act 1. Otherwise why would Enya Hangan draw his sword?

MIYAUCHI: Nonsense, Tokujirō! You're not playing Moronao in *Chūshingura*!

SHICHŌ: Baron, forgive my father. Tomorrow I'll do his makeup. It'll be more natural for Western theatre.

MIYAUCHI: Shichō, all actors in our new theatre should be like you. You're the only one. But the rest of the troupe . . .

(HANJŪRŌ returns from the dressing room, right, wearing an odd combination of Western and Japanese clothing. He has removed his wig but still has the silk cloth covering his scalp to represent a shaved pate. MIYAUCHI, speechless with dismay, turns to UMEMATSU.)

MIYAUCHI: Umematsu! Polonius is chamberlain to the King of Denmark. He can't be in Japanese *hakama*. Change into something Western.

UMEMATSU: Never in all my born days have I worn Western clothes.

MIYAUCHI: Borrow from someone.

UMEMATSU: I don't feel like playing a Westerner. I am not playing Lord Chamberlain. I am playing Kudayū—old adviser to Enya Hangan—and today we are rehearsing *Chūshingura*. If you didn't know, the correct dress for a runthrough is *hakama* and *haori* with family crest.

MIYAUCHI: Must I repeat? This is not stale *Chūshingura*!

UMEMATSU: You don't like it? I was happy to come to this Shintomi-za to play *Chūshingura*, invited by the great and distinguished Morita Kan'ya. I've done Kudayū on tour many times in lesser theatres, telling myself one day I'll perform it in Tokyo. I thought my life's dream had come true, but when I got here I found we're doing Ham . . . something, and I was to be not an old samurai adviser but a Western chamberlain. Imagine how upset I was!

SHINZŌ: Umematsu, don't be bullheaded. We've played *Chūshingura* in the sticks. Now in the big city we do *Hamlet* in a classy theatre. You said you would. You can't let me down at this late hour.

UMEMATSU: Narita-ya (Shinzō), at the script reading Master Morita Kan'ya told me out of the blue that he was doing a Western play. I was surprised, thinking it a big mistake. But then I thought, "No," Morita is the master showman with something up his sleeve. He got President Grant of the U.S. and the prince of Germany to visit the Shintomi-za. He even put together on stage a Western actor and Danjūrō IX. He's cozy with things Western, like *wasabi* and *sashimi* needing each other. I figured he was having a new brainstorm, so I said "I leave it to you." I came today, but no Morita. Instead, only this rascal I do not know!

HANJŪRŌ: He's . . .

UMEMATSU: Fresh back from America. Baron Miyauchi. An aristocrat . . . from a well-known family. A theatrical reformer. In the world of theatre, you could call him "ice cream."

GENNOSUKE: Umematsu, have you ever tasted ice cream?

UMEMATSU: Yes. Twenty years ago when President Grant on a goodwill world tour attended a special performance, Master Morita Kan'ya ordered ice cream from the foreign enclave in Yokohama. I was invited to eat some.

MIYAUCHI: Ice cream in Western civilized nations is an after-dinner dessert. Only once, twenty years ago, you had it. So what do you know?

UMEMATSU: Your theatrical reforms will melt away, just like ice cream.

SHINZŌ: Izumi-ya (Umematsu), Baron Miyauchi has studied new theatre in the United States, home of advanced theatre, for two years. He's chosen Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, best of the West, for Japan. It's a first for Japan. Daring, isn't it?

UMEMATSU: Narita-ya, your Yuranosuke in *Chūshingura*—learned from the great Danjūrō IX—amazed me. How powerful you were as the leader of the forty-seven samurai! Compared to Yuranosuke, this Hamlet in frock coat is like a street vendor hawking “bread.”

TOKUJIRŌ: Right you are! (*Does a rhythmical song and dance with his fan. GENNOSUKE beats time on a large drum.*) “Bread, bread, bread. Behold . . . hot and crusty. Taste civilization! Lengthen life! It’s something new, new, new!”<sup>12</sup>

SHINZŌ: You insult me! Instead of this frock coat, if only I were wearing a real costume for Hamlet . . .

UMEMATSU: No matter how your prince dresses, he’ll always look like a piece of bread.

SHINZŌ: You go too far!

*(Actors converge as they argue but disperse and kneel, bowing formally, when MORITA KAN’YA enters. He is a soft-spoken person of fifty-one years, dressed in a fine Western suit, but his sharp eyes belie that he is a gentleman.)*

KAN’YA: Shinzō, Umematsu. Enough.

MIYAUCHI: Morita, what’s going on? Nothing’s ready for rehearsal! No costumes. No props.

KAN’YA: Sorry. As always, the Shintomi-za can never get a perfect set of costumes ready. Baron, I’m also sorry I’m late for this rehearsal.

UMEMATSU: I heard you were sick. All right now?

KAN’YA: It was nothing. . . . Just getting old. Who put that curtain there?

MIYAUCHI: The set is supposed to be Elsinor Castle . . . not something shabby. I can still see the Brooklyn Academy of Music decor: a New York facade, dark walls, blazing tapestry. Here in backward Japan, we can’t equal it. But as it was, the stage looked more like a prison than a palace.

SHINZŌ: The baron asked if we could cover the wall. I remembered this curtain and told old Tome to put it up.

KAN’YA: Well, if the baron ordered it. But remember, the American President Grant gave me this curtain when he came to the Shintomi-za to see *kabuki*. He was pleased. There’s no other like it in Japan. Be careful with it.

SHINZŌ: I’ve cautioned everyone.

MIYAUCHI: Morita, where’s Gertrude?

KAN’YA: Takinojō, our lead *onnagata*, is difficult. At the readthrough he was fine, but the minute I’m gone, he gets on his high horse. Don’t worry, Baron. I’ll handle him.

MIYAUCHI: Another thing. These old-fashioned actors aren’t making

any effort to understand Shakespeare's grandeur. They rattle on about *Chūshingura*, Kudayū. At this rate, it's impossible for me to direct *Hamlet*.

UMEMATSU: Hooray! Now that Morita Kan'ya is here, tomorrow we'll do *Chūshingura*! Baron, have you ever seen *Chūshingura*?

MIYAUCHI: I've never set foot in *kabuki*.

UMEMATSU: Your beloved Shakespeare may be grand abroad, but he'll never succeed here. In Japan, actors inherit their roles in *Chūshingura* from father to son for generations.

MIYAUCHI: No wonder Japanese theatre is primitive, vulgar.

GENNOSUKE: (*Coming between them.*) Vulgar? Primitive? I'll show you! (*Moves to center and kneels as, while talking, he rapidly mimes Hangan's movements in the famous seppuku scene.*) Ten years ago the emperor and empress came to see the stars of Tokyo in *Chūshingura*. It was the fourth act, where Lord Enya Hangan commits seppuku. Kikugorō V sat in deathly pale kimono. "Officials! Attest to my death." And he stabbed himself.

UMEMATSU: (*Moving like Yuranosuke, as if entering on the hanamichi, and reenacting Yuranosuke's encounter with the dying Hangan.*) As soon as the *hanamichi* curtain opened, Danjūrō IX ran down the pathway to the stage. . . . "Yuranosuke has come."

GENNOSUKE: "Is it you? How I've waited for you."

UMEMATSU: "I am only grateful to see you yet alive."

KAN'YA: Izumi-ya (Umematsu)! Grow up!

UMEMATSU: Sir. Ever since that command performance, you have been called the "Shogun of the Theatre." You have managed actors all over Tokyo in one new astonishment after another. We have followed you blindly. It's now ten years since. What are you planning now? Why do we need to listen to someone who knows nothing about theatre . . . this Fish Baron?

MIYAUCHI: Fish!

UMEMATSU: (*Adapting the goading lines of Moronao in Chūshingura and gesturing with his fan.*) Do not take offense! Hear me out! The fish swam in the West for a year or two and thought it paradise. Back in Japan, all is not to his liking. The fish lost his way . . . swam hither, thither . . . bumping his fish-nose on the sides of the little pool. Finally, his pride snaps . . . he dies. Fish, fish, Fish Baron!

KAN'YA: Umematsu! Stop the mockery! Your Kudayū is good enough for our Shintomi-za. But in this age of enlightenment we can't wallow in the same old ruts, giving Tokyo audiences *Chūshingura* again and again. Now that we won the war in China, all Japan sees the advantages of the West. Put a Western name on anything and it sells. The world changes; theatre changes.

(Enter TOME, an old stagehand, from the right, wearing shabby knickers over his kimono. His gray hair is fashioned in a topknot.)

TOME: Master, I'm late.

KAN'YA: Old Tome. Thank you for your trouble.

(MIYAUCHI is amazed to see the personification of the antiquated kabuki in this shabby old man.)

MIYAUCHI: Morita, who's this with a topknot?

KAN'YA: Shintomi-za's chief stagehand. He's important.

MIYAUCHI: In this bastion of new theatre—center of theatrical reformation—such a relic still exists after thirty years of Meiji modernization?

TOME: (*Grinning.*) Everyone in the theatre world knows me and my old-fashioned hair. When the government ordered men to cut their long hair, Hōrai-ya (Tokujirō) and I didn't—

KAN'YA: (*Breaks in.*) Tome, where's Kiyotaki-ya (Takinojō), our Queen? Backstage?

TOME: Kiyotaki-ya is at home.

MIYAUCHI: What!

TOME: He says he won't come.

KAN'YA: He has to play Gertrude.

TOME: He thought he was to be in *Chūshingura* as Lady Kaoyo. But it was changed to some "Western" play.

KAN'YA: (*Angrily.*) Nothing changed. It was always my plan.

GENNOSUKE: Oh, great theatre schemer!

KAN'YA: Shut up, Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke)!

GENNOSUKE: Why do you complicate everything? Morita Kan'ya, twelfth generation of actor-managers, all Tokyo knows you favor things Western.

UMEMATSU: You don't drink sake now, only beer, saying sake is unhealthy. No more soy sauce, you now take *sashimi* with salt.

KAN'YA: You're observant. You noticed?

GENNOSUKE: You cook up Western novelties to be popular. Ever since you founded the Shintomi-za twenty-five years ago, that's been your emphasis. I know *Hamlet* is a masterpiece by a great writer from Great Britain, home of civilization. What I don't get is why you put the sign for *Chūshingura* on top of the announcement for *Hamlet*.

MIYAUCHI: Yes, why? *Hamlet*'s premiere must be announced. I'm puzzled, too.

KAKŌ: (*Enters from the palanquin, the flap of which is suddenly tossed aside*

*by a stage assistant. He walks with a staff, carries a round fan, and is dressed in a blue and white checkerboard-pattern kimono.)* Master Morita is as clever at publicity as he is at secrecy. He's something up his sleeve.

KAN'YA: Kakō! Why are you here?

KAKŌ: I was supposed to play Okaya, Okaru's mother, in *Chūshingura*. But everything turned into *Hamlet*. How odd. I stayed to peek at a Western play. Why did Takinojō turn down the Queen's role?

TOME: He doesn't want to be a woman with two husbands.

MIYAUCHI: What?

TOME: Enya Hangan's wife, Lady Kaoyo, is chaste. She ignores Moronao's advances. After her husband commits seppuku she cuts off her hair. But this Queen Ge . . . Ge . . . Ge . . .

KAKŌ: Gertrude.

TOME: Whatever—marries her brother-in-law two months after her husband's death. She connives against her own son. She's a bitch.

KAN'YA: By play's end she comes to her senses. I told him.

TOME: But she doesn't plan her own suicide. She accidentally drinks poison. The role is not appropriate for a star *onnagata*. He says that if he played her, his fans would desert him.

SHINZŌ: Tomorrow is the opening. Kiyotaki-ya is our leading *onnagata*. It's unforgivable!

TOME: He also says there's no sex in playing Yuranosuke's mother!

MIYAUCHI: Gertrude is Hamlet's mother!

SHINZŌ: What he means is in *Chūshingura* I always played Yuranosuke, and Kiyotaki-ya doesn't want to be my mother.

GENNOSUKE: Kiyotaki-ya in *Chūshingura* plays two roles, Lady Kaoyo, Enya's wife, and Honzō's wife Tonase. I, as a young *onnagata*, play two roles too. When *Chūshingura* turned into *Hamlet* I assumed I'd be Princess Ophelia. But Master Morita cast me as Horatio. For an *onnagata* to play Hamlet's buddy is queer, don't you think?

KAN'YA: Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke), when programs change, roles change. Look at Nakajima-ya (Hanjūrō). He gave up two handsome roles, Enya Hangan and Kampei, to be one ghost. He's not bitching!

HANJŪRŌ: Even with my Osaka accent, Master Morita accepted me into Tokyo. I can't complain.

GENNOSUKE: I'm upset at being bypassed. I am the troupe's young *onnagata*. An actor from our rival Kabuki-za is Ophelia.

SHINZŌ: Who's up there in the balcony?

TOME: I'll go see.

KAN'YA: It might be Horitani's spy. (*To HANJŪRŌ:*) You go with Tome.

HANJŪRŌ: Ye——s.

(Exit TOME and HANJŪRŌ, running, into audience.)

MIYAUCHI: Morita, who's Horitani?

KAN'YA: Some squirt from Osaka. Nobody to fret about.

GENNOSUKE: He recently signed up some young *kabuki* stars. He's a power in Osaka.

KAN'YA: Big in Osaka where there's no competition.

UMEMATSU: Why would he come to the Shintomi-za?

KAN'YA: He holds a weak opinion of our worth. So much for him.

TOKUJIRŌ: My muscles ache from sitting in a chair.

KAN'YA: We can't start rehearsing without Kiyotaki-ya. Be patient. He sees roles in his own way. He won't back down.

SHINZŌ: So we postpone tomorrow's opening?

KAN'YA: We can't. *Hamlet* opens tomorrow, no matter what.

SHINZŌ: Without a leading *onnagata*? Who can be Queen?

KAN'YA: I just don't know.

(TOKUJIRŌ, sighing, takes off his hat, revealing a topknot.)

MIYAUCHI: (*Disgusted.*) The King of Denmark in Japan's first *Hamlet* has a feudal souvenir on his head.

KAN'YA: Hōrai-ya (Tokujirō), you promised to cut your hair.

TOKUJIRŌ: I did, but this morning I went to the barber and ran into an old man who used to dress topknots. Such men are retired. We just looked at each other and sighed. I came away uncut.

UMEMATSU: That's why you kept your hat on.

KAN'YA: Samurai-long hair has been forbidden for twenty-five years.

TOKUJIRŌ: I had my hair like this thirty years before the law. I can't stop now.

SHINZŌ: Waka-Hōrai (Shichō). You're his son. . . . Do something.

SHICHŌ: My father's set in his ways. If he wears a crown the audience won't notice. Let him keep it.

MIYAUCHI: Impossible! When *Hamlet* stabs Claudius, the crown might fall off. The King of Denmark with a samurai hairdo. Preposterous. The premiere will be ruined.

UMEMATSU: Baron Ice Cream! Your *Hamlet*'s melting away drop by drop.

KAKŌ: That's awful of you! From the beginning you've been pouring hot water on ice cream. You're to blame for Polonius becoming Kudayū and for Claudius' old-style hair. And no Gertrude. I came to see a Western play rehearsed. But . . .

KAN'YA: Yoshizawa-ya (Kakō). In *Chūshingura*, at Kampei's house, you're Okaya, Okaru's mother. Could you play a queen?

GENNOSUKE: But in *Chūshingura*, Okaya is an old peasant woman in a village. A far cry from Queen of Denmark.

KAN'YA: Yes, but Okaya is Okaru's mother. Gertrude is Hamlet's mother. Think this way, and they're the same.

MIYAUCHI: I object. Just how old are you, Kakō?

KAKŌ: I was born in 1839.

UMEMATSU: That makes you fifty-nine, only seven years older than me? Not bloody likely.

KAKŌ: Who says so?

SHINZŌ: I heard you were born in 1827.

KAKŌ: Tactless! Any *onnagata* can be as young as he wishes.

SHINZŌ: But twelve years younger is a bit much.

KAN'YA: At seventy you're only eight years older than Hōrai-ya (Tokujirō), our Claudius.

MIYAUCHI: I object. Gertrude is young and attractive. That's why Claudius murders his brother.

KAN'YA: But Gertrude is Claudius' older sister-in-law. She could be eight years older than he. Gertrude's first husband is killed by his younger brother. In *Chūshingura* Okaya's husband is killed by young Sadakurō. Gertrude and Okaya both have their husbands murdered by younger men, and both sons get murdered, too. Now, Kakō, the part's yours!

KAKŌ: I never thought I'd be a Western queen. Before Meiji, I'd be beheaded for even thinking such.

KAN'YA: Sit on the throne. You'll be prompted.

KAKŌ: No need. I read the text three times. Easy to memorize when the words are so unusual. (*Walks upstage unsteadily, contrary to his glib manner.*)

GENNOSUKE: Do queens teeter-totter like that?

KAKŌ: Just you watch what this old queen can do!

(KAKŌ *straightens up, though a little crudely, puts on a formal outer robe [uchikake] and changes into a dignified queen, progressing grandly up to the throne in haughty kabuki fashion.*)

SHINZŌ: Magnificent.

KAKŌ: Izumi-ya (Umematsu), stop being stubborn.

UMEMATSU: I don't want to be in a Western play. I'm going home.

SHINZŌ: We can't do without Polonius.

GENNOSUKE: And Claudius has a topknot!

(TOME and HANJŪRŌ *enter from the audience, bringing OKAMOTO KIDŌ along with them. KIDŌ, twenty-five, is drama critic and journalist*)

*for the Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun newspaper. Wearing a finely patterned haori jacket over his kimono, he is an educated young gentleman born into a family of former shogunate retainers.)*

KIDŌ: The day before opening anyone is allowed to watch from the third balcony—as a real Edo man, Morita Kan'ya knows.

KAN'YA: Who are you?

KIDŌ: Okamoto Kidō. I write the theatre column in the *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun*.

KAN'YA: I've seen your name.

KIDŌ: I'm honored.

KAN'YA: You wrote: "Recent Shintomi-za stagings by Morita Kan'ya lack the vitality of past productions. After his command performance of a decade ago, and subsequent hobnobbing with government officials and business bigwigs, he has lost his devotion to theatre."

KIDŌ: Oh, dear.

KAN'YA: You're too young to have seen my early Shintomi-za productions.

KIDŌ: My father used to take me to Danjūrō's dressing room and backstage here at the Shintomi-za. Old Tome would give me cakes and Western candies. Out front I'd get sleepy.

MIYAUCHI: This is the first step toward modern theatre in Japan—a Shakespearean masterpiece, *Hamlet*, an epoch-making rehearsal. It is not an ordinary rehearsal. Leave at once!

KIDŌ: You must be the distinguished Baron Miyauchi, just back from America. But where is a rehearsal? So far, all you've done is bicker.

KAN'YA: Write what you want in the newspaper. Just go!

KIDŌ: (*Speaks from audience area below raised stage at right. UMEMATSU, kneeling, is alone at center, with others on periphery of stage.*) First, may I speak to Umematsu? Umematsu-san, because he's a foreigner, you're hostile to Polonius. But he's no different from your Kudayū in *Chūshingura*. Polonius is chamberlain to Hamlet's father. Then after the king's murder, Polonius curries favor with the enemy, Claudius. Just as in *Chūshingura*, Kudayū fawns over Moronao and becomes his spy.

UMEMATSU: Indeed, in *Chūshingura*, Kudayū is the old adviser serving Lord Enya Hangan. And after the lord's seppuku, he switches sides to the enemy Moronao. He's a "soldier serving under two flags."

KIDŌ: Polonius and Kudayū both have hotblooded sons, Laertes and Sadakurō. Laertes is better than the thief-murderer Sadakurō. You see?

UMEMATSU: Yes.



FIGURE 7. “KIDŌ: First, may I speak to Umematsu?” *Left to right:* Player (Mori Genjirō), Player (Kikuchi Akitomo), Kidō (Uchida Ryūma), Player (Teshigawara Takeshi), Shichō (Isogai Makoto), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi), Tokujirō (Kubo Kōichi), Gennosuke (Ueda Shun), Kakō (Sakamoto Nagatoshi), Umematsu (Hayashi Akio). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1994, Tōkyō Globe-za.

KIDŌ: Kudayū in *Chūshingura*, Act 7, hides under the floor, sneakily reads Yuranosuke’s letter plotting revenge, and is stabbed through the tatami. Polonius hides behind the arras in the Queen’s bedroom to eavesdrop on Hamlet and the Queen. Hamlet stabs him. Each was going to betray the hero in each play. Think of *Hamlet* as a rewrite of *Chūshingura* . . .

MIYAUCHI: What rot!

KIDŌ: Umematsu-san, your role is called Polonius, but it’s really Kudayū!

UMEMATSU: Master Morita, I don’t feel like playing a foreigner. But if you call me Kudayū, I’ll be in your *Hamlet*.

MIYAUCHI: Impossible. It’s ridiculous to put a role from *Chūshingura* into *Hamlet*!

KAN’YA: No, it’s all right. Cast! Umematsu is not Polonius but Kudayū. Okay? Hanjūrō, give your trousers to Umematsu.

(HANJŪRŌ, crying at the loss of his trousers, is hastened off at right.)

KAN'YA: (*Privately.*) Baron, don't worry. Umematsu's notorious for fussing. Call him Kudayū during rehearsal; he'll save face. Otherwise, you won't have a Polonius. Umematsu's more westernized than you think. He's had a Western lunch every day in his dressing room.

MIYAUCHI: Western lunch?

KAN'YA: Tomorrow, at last, Denmark will have a lord chamberlain. Okamoto (Kidō)-san, I owe you one.

KIDŌ: The only repayment I ask is to see the rehearsal. At last I'm seeing theatre the way the Shintomi-za used to be.

UMEMATSU: (*Now wearing trousers instead of hakama, but still in kimono.*) Can someone help me with these Western buttons?

KAN'YA: Buttons won't bite your fingers.

UMEMATSU: Someone, do help me.

KAN'YA: Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke), help him. You're always parading yourself around in fancy Western suits. Hōrai-ya (Tokujirō), undo your topknot. Baron, *Hamlet* is set in ancient Denmark when people didn't have short hair.

MIYAUCHI: Yes, but . . .

(SHICHŌ *undoes TOKUJIRŌ's topknot, letting his long, silver hair stream to his shoulders.*)

KAN'YA: (*Putting a hat on TOKUJIRŌ.*) With a crown, he looks a little like a king.

MIYAUCHI: Suit yourself!

SHICHŌ: Father, all right now?

TOKUJIRŌ: (*Pleased.*) Yes.

SHINZŌ: At last, the cast's ready. *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 2. A room of state in Elsinor Castle.

MIYAUCHI: (*As actors take their places.*) King Claudius, on your throne. Gertrude, raise your head. Your crown will fall off. Hamlet, sit away from the throne. Show your profile. Polonius, go next to Claudius. Polonius!

(UMEMATSU *pretends not to hear.*)

KAN'YA: Kudayū, stand next to Claudius.

UMEMATSU: Yes, Master.

MIYAUCHI: Ready. Action.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: (*In an unexpectedly eloquent rhythm, although a stage assistant prompts him soto voce.*)

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
 To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
 To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
 Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—  
 With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
 With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
 Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd  
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
 With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
 But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son—

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*Aside.*) A little more than kin, and less than kind.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Not so, my lord, I am too much in the sun.

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: (*Also old-fashioned, but dignified.*)

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,  
 And let thine eye look like a friend of Denmark.



FIGURE 8. “TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother’s death . . .” *Left to right:* Shichō (Isogai Makoto), Gennosuke (Ueda Shun), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi), Umematsu (Hayashi Akio), Tokujirō (Kubo Kōichi). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1994, Tōkyō Globe-za.

Do not for ever with thy veiled lids  
 Seek for thy noble father in the dust.  
 Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,  
 Passing through nature to eternity.

*(Strikes staff on ground to emphasize final line.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Ay, madam, it is common.

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE:

If it be,  
 Why seems it so particular with thee?

*(During the following speech, MIYAUCHI adjusts the positions of the other actors.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not "seems."  
 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
 Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
 Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,  
 Together with all forms, modes, shows, of grief,  
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,  
 For they are actions that a man might play:  
 But I have that within which passeth show;  
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*(KIDŌ and TOME discuss something in the audience, while MIYAUCHI restlessly walks among the actors, making a nuisance of himself, trying to improve their form. HANJŪRŌ sits alone in a corner of the stage, while KAN'YA gazes at the stage from the audience. GENNOSUKE approaches SHICHŌ standing at the downstage edge of the stage.)*

GENNOSUKE: Waka-Hōrai (Shichō), what're you looking at so intently?

SHICHŌ: Shinzō's Hamlet's classy. Like a real Danish prince.

GENNOSUKE: So great a Yuranosuke actor is wasted on Hamlet. Shinzō should be playing Yuranosuke in a big Tokyo theatre. Here we are finally in the big time on the Shintomi-za's first-class stage, and in a Western play . . .

SHICHŌ: Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke), you're caught up with your dreary little theatre on the wrong side of town. Playing illogical vulgar old-fashioned *kabuki* over and over again.

GENNOSUKE: Ten years ago when I left the Shintomi-za I knew I was best suited for what you call the illogical and vulgar.

SHICHŌ: If we only act in plays of bloodshed and erotic love, actors will always be outcasts. We are blessed in the Meiji era. Fine men are thinking of educating the masses by means of theatre. Danjūrō IX was the first but now we too are being accepted. Our duty is to respond by performing more refined plays, more suitable to the new era.

GENNOSUKE: Even if refined plays come into fashion, we can't change ourselves. Audiences who come on foot to parks don't want "to be educated."

SHICHŌ: Narita-ya (Shinzō) belonged to Danjūrō's troupe but drifted away from Tokyo. As a new actor he can succeed. He must play this Western prince in grand style.

(KAN'YA, *noticing the argument, nonchalantly breaks in.*)

KAN'YA: Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke), I asked Waka-Hōrai (Shichō) to play Ophelia. You'd be beautiful in a Western gown, I know; but you're too sexy to be a lord chamberlain's daughter.

GENNOSUKE: Are you removing courtesans and geishas from the stage and putting princesses in their place?

KAN'YA: You're perfect in erotic roles . . . in love scenes . . . but look at my curtain given by a president of the United States. My Shintomi-za is the only theatre in the world with such a thing. Our theatres used to be called "sin spots" and "dens of iniquity" but I raised the level of *kabuki*. Influenced by the West, we made a new theatre, more logical, more human.

SHICHŌ: Thanks to Western influences, we actors could show our art to the emperor. Ten years ago, you were Okaru at that command performance, Kinokuni-ya (Gennosuke). Don't you understand?

GENNOSUKE: (*Shouting.*) Master Morita, you invited famous people and foreigners to see your plays. You built the Shintomi-za in Western style. You became a westernized gentleman, but we think of you as our old master from the olden days, although you've erased those days from the Shintomi-za.

SHICHŌ: If you can't forget that past, how can you understand the new?

GENNOSUKE: I don't care if it's new or old and vulgar or refined, I just want us to do "theatrical theatre." (*Turns sharply away, leaving the other two.*)

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: (*Resuming his kabuki-esque manner.*) I pray thee stay with us, go not back to school in Wittenberg.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS:

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.  
 Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.  
 This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
 Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,  
 No jocund health that Denmark drinks today  
 But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
 And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,  
 Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*(Company moves off in kabuki style upstage right to the increasingly rapid beating of wooden clappers.)*

KAN'YA: Gennosuke is a fine actor, but he's caught up in old-style histrionics. In *Chūshingura* he's a wonderful Okaru, but he'd be hopeless as Ophelia. Shichō, after *Hamlet* I plan on staging more and more Western plays. I want Shinzō as leading man, and I want you opposite him. That was my intention in getting you, a favorite of Danjūrō IX, away from the Kabuki-za, to be our Ophelia. Danjūrō and Kikugorō are old. You and Shinzō will be the stars in Japan's future theatre. My eye is unerring.

*(Beating of a large drum begins slowly, gradually accelerates during the following. Only SHICHŌ and KAN'YA are onstage. SHICHŌ speaks to KAN'YA as he passes him.)*

SHICHŌ: Have you talked to Shinzō?

KAN'YA: Yes. Tomorrow, at last, *Hamlet's* premiere. For the first time in Japan a Western drama here. Until then, I await your favorable answer.

*(SHICHŌ leaves. Spotlight picks out SHINZŌ's face, then fades to black.)*

## ACT 2

*(At the crack of wooden clappers, the lights come up to reveal a rehearsal in progress of Hamlet. Act 2, Scene 2, a room in Elsinore Castle. Many more tubs and buckets are sitting about the stage than in Act 1. SHINZŌ/HAMLET wears his frock coat with his left shoulder bared, revealing his white shirt. UMEMATSU/POLONIUS has put on hakama again.)*

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: My lord, I have news to tell you.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*Moving about bizarrely, before sitting on his haunches, center.*) My lord, I have news to tell you.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: The actors are come hither, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Buzz, Buzz.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: Upon my honor—

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Then came each actor on his ass—

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: (*Speaks in rhythmic kabuki fashion, using his closed fan for emphatic gestures.*) The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: You are welcome, masters. Welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends.

*(To the sound of a drum beating, the PLAYERS in Hamlet enter from right. They wear kimonos and basket hats that hide their faces. They move into a line downstage, facing upstage on their knees, and remain silent.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: God's bodykins, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: Come, sirs.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Follow him, friends. We'll hear a play tomorrow.

*(Following UMEMATSU/POLONIUS, all the players exit except FIRST PLAYER, who removes his basket hat.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Dost thou hear me, old friend? Can you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?

FIRST PLAYER: Ay, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: We'll ha't tomorrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

FIRST PLAYER: Ay, my lord.



FIGURE 9. “SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Follow him, friends.” *Left to right:* Umematsu (Hayashi Akio), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi), with Players downstage. *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1994, Tōkyō Globe-za.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Very well. Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

*(Exit the FIRST PLAYER right. One of the PLAYERS enters, passing him, removes his basket hat, and addresses KAN'YA, who is seated just below the stage, at right. The man, dressed in a formal kimono and haori and holding a small bag in his hand, is a clerk at Nishigami's, a moneylender. He kneels deferentially at center stage. The other principal actors mill around upstage, observing with interest.)*

KAN'YA: The loan shark's clerk!

CLERK: I had to see you, but I'd have been turned away so I disguised myself as an actor.

KAN'YA: I'm busy rehearsing.

CLERK: Today's interest is thirty-seven yen and eighty-three sen. My boss says to come back with the money.

KAN'YA: I paid yesterday's interest. Today I can't pay. After tomorrow's premiere, money will roll in! It looks like a hit.

CLERK: I can't go back empty-handed. You paid yesterday by pawning costumes and props.

MIYAUCHI: What?

KAN'YA: Baron, I'm ashamed. Definitely I'll redeem everything tomorrow.

CLERK: You still have something. That evening gown will take care of today.

MIYAUCHI: Stop! I bought that dress in France for my wife. Shichō is only borrowing it for *Hamlet*. Impossible to pawn it.

CLERK: Then pay the loan's interest.

KAN'YA: I've no money, I said.

CLERK: Morita-san, you're our best customer. You don't pay back the loan but you always pay the interest. You mean to spoil your credit rating?

MIYAUCHI: Morita, why is a common little usurer pestering you?

KAN'YA: Baron, I am mortified. For the sake of *Hamlet*, for new theatre in Japan, would you kindly pay today's interest?

MIYAUCHI: I've misjudged you. I said I'd pay for *Hamlet's* Japanese debut so I could direct. You've pawned my costumes and props that I designed, and now you have the gall to ask me to cover your debts! Impossible.

KAN'YA: What's wrong with debts? No big production is possible without them. My father taught me to write promissory notes before he taught me my ABC. I built this theatre, the Shintomi-za, on debts. I borrowed to invite dignitaries from here and abroad, including President Grant, to performances. I produced plays on debts. Piling debts one on top of the other gave me great fame.

CLERK: You said "General Grant?" I'll take that curtain.

KAN'YA: No, you won't. It's the souvenir of my lifetime.

CLERK: Hock it, and for three to five days, I won't dun you.

KAN'YA: For my ideals, I've pawned everything. But Grant's curtain? . . . Not even for *Hamlet*.

UMEMATSU: "Neither a borrower nor lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

KAKŌ: You know Chamberlain Po . . . Polo's—speech. Interested in Western theatre, after all?

KAN'YA: Polonius is right. All a man has left is reputation. Gennosuke, you left me for a little theatre in the poor part of town. Danjūrō and Kikugorō, whom I helped, deserted for the Kabuki-za. And now I don't even own my Shintomi-za.

SHINZŌ: (*Prostrating himself before MIYAUCHI.*) Baron, I beg you. Please help us. If today's interest isn't paid, we can't open. I must play *Hamlet* somehow!

MIYAUCHI: No! I wash my hands of *Hamlet*! No costumes. No props. Polonius, a feudal retainer. Gertrude, an old farmer woman. Claud-

ius has a samurai hairdo. I can't go on. A Japanese *Hamlet* has been a mistake from the beginning. It's too premature.

SHINZŌ: (*To CLERK.*) At least, let us continue rehearsing. It was going well.

CLERK: Only if I get my money.

GENNOSUKE: Why not stay here, see the opening, then go back?

CLERK: Tokyo knows moneylender Nishigami well! Don't try to sucker him. The Shintomi-za may be important, but it's been put up as collateral. My boss can buy it from Mr. Chiba any old time!

SHINZŌ: (*Rushing up right to the curtain.*) Master Morita, for *Hamlet's* sake, pawn the curtain!

KAN'YA: I can't part with it any more than I can part with myself.

UMEMATSU: (*Becomes KUDAYŪ in Act 7 of Chūshingura.*) "Great success allows small failures. Good men can't worry about criticism for borrowing money to make great theatre. I have faith in you, sir."

SHINZŌ: And you were such trouble about being Kudayū.

UMEMATSU: I'll pay the interest.

(UMEMATSU, taking a kneeling position, withdraws a rolled-up white cloth from his kimono, lays it on the floor as he unrolls it, and removes from it a purse. He removes a number of bills and pays off the CLERK.)

KAN'YA: And everyone calls you stingy.

UMEMATSU: What they say is I'm rich . . . but I'm not really.

KAN'YA: Umematsu, I owe you.

UMEMATSU: It's no loan. I don't expect it back.

CLERK: You're paid up, Morita-san. See you!

(*The CLERK exits right. SHINZŌ prostrates himself gratefully before UMEMATSU. SHICHŌ does likewise and GENNOSUKE, crouching at UMEMATSU's side, offers his thanks as well.*)

KAN'YA: I'm embarrassed. (*Looking not in the least embarrassed.*) But everything turned out all right.

(MIYAUCHI *doesn't think everything turned out all right.*)

MIYAUCHI: (*Standing with KAN'YA in the space in front of the stage.*)

Morita, I didn't know you were such a famous borrower. What are all these pans? The roof leaks, does it? What if it rains tomorrow?

KAN'YA: Baron, don't worry. On Shintomi-za openings, it never rains. . . . Not once since I opened in 1872. Now . . . get on with the rehearsal!

(TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS, KAKŌ/GERTRUDE, UMEMATSU/POLONIUS, and SHICHŌ/OPHELIA take positions at center stage. After the crack of wooden clappers, TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS speaks.)

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS:

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too,  
For we have secretly sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront Ophelia. Polonius . . .

SHICHŌ: (*Whispering.*) Father, Kudayū!

TOKUJIRŌ: (*In grand kabuki style.*) Hail, Kudayū, thee and mineself!

UMEMATSU: Call me Polonius. I've been an old fool.

TOKUJIRŌ: Why didn't you say so sooner?

KAN'YA: Start from Polonius.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS:

Her father and myself, lawful espials,  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If't be the affliction of his love or no,  
That thus he suffers for.

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE:

I shall obey you.  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues  
Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
To both your honors.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: Madam, I wish it may.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS:

Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves. Read on this book;  
That show of such an exercise may color  
Your loneliness . . .  
I hear him coming. Let's withdraw, my lord.

KIDŌ: (*From a position near the stage at left.*) Kakō-san, first Japanese  
"Queen." It's as if you're at it for ten years.

KAKŌ: If I were ten years younger, I'd seduce not just Claudius but  
Hamlet and Polonius too!

KIDŌ: And Horatio?

KAKŌ: No, he has the hots for Hamlet.

(Exit TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS and UMEMATSU/POLONIUS. Enter SHINZŌ/HAMLET.)

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*Wearing a cloak, its top button closed at the throat, he delivers these lines awkwardly.*)

To be or not to be, that is the question:  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
 And by opposing, end them? To die . . . to sleep,  
 No more . . .

MIYAUCHI: This is god-awful. This is Hamlet's most famous soliloquy.  
 Give it inner feeling . . . make it live.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*Even more awkwardly.*) To be or not to be? That is the question—?

KAN'YA: Narita-ya, your long solos are famous. Modulate your voice.

SHINZŌ: But in *kabuki*, declamations are punctuated with wood clappers and turn into dance . . . become theatrical.

MIYAUCHI: You still don't get modern theatre. It's not stereotyped stylization. It's innermost heart and feelings. I'm sick of telling you.

SHINZŌ: Truth to tell, I don't understand "heart," "feelings." What's Hamlet thinking anyway?

MIYAUCHI: What?

SHINZŌ: Hamlet sees his father's ghost . . . swears revenge. Why does he talk at length about suicide and what happens after death?

TOKUJIRŌ: Yes. *Chūshingura*'s loyal Yuranosuke, after his lord's seppuku, has an undivided mind to kill Moronao. He doesn't shilly-shally about whether to be or not to be.

MIYAUCHI: Hamlet is not Yuranosuke! The Tokugawa shogunate toppled thirty years ago. It's 1897 now and Japanese theatre is still in the Dark Ages . . . still caught in *Chūshingura*.

KAN'YA: Hōrai-ya, *Chūshingura* talk is taboo, unless you want your top-knot chopped off.

TOKUJIRŌ: Let me keep my hair.

KAN'YA: Baron, Shinzō is a fine actor for modern theatre. Please interpret Hamlet's "heart" for him somehow.

SHINZŌ: At the Shintomi-za, Hamlet's a do-or-die role for me. Baron!

MIYAUCHI: I understand . . . Shinzō. Hamlet is not really thinking of killing himself. He's pondering life and death . . . the power of imagination versus the power of action. He's engrossed in the philosophy of life.

KAKŌ: Why philosophize? Just avenge.



FIGURE 10. “SHINZŌ: At the Shintomi-za, Hamlet’s a do-or-die role for me.”  
*Left to right:* Kan’ya (Kobayashi Katsuya), Gennosuke (Kaneda Akio), Umematsu (Hayashi Akio), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi), Miyauchi (Kataoka Hiroki), Shichō (Isogai Makoto). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1992, Haiyū-za, Tokyo.

UMEMATSU: Better just skip the soliloquy. Go straight to the sex scene with the girl. It’s clearer that way.

MIYAUCHI: Omit “To be or not to be”? Not on your life! *Hamlet* is Shakespeare’s most wonderful play. It’s his most beautiful speech. *Hamlet* is finished. My dream for a Japanese performance is over!

KAN’YA: (*To KAKŌ and UMEMATSU.*) Keep quiet. Baron, please wait! (*Kneels before MIYAUCHI in the space before the stage.*) Remember what you said when we first met. I can’t forget. You said: “Western theatre always has a director . . . over the actors. If Japan were a stage, the director’d be emperor, guiding the actors from the clouds to the right, to the left. The stage becomes the director’s world.” When I heard this, my eyes opened. Japanese theatre hasn’t caught up with the West yet, because we haven’t a single director. You were in New York for two years, seeing every kind of theatre. You’re Japan’s first “new” theatre director. For the sake of theatrical reform, for the sake of Japan, don’t give up on us. Move Shinzō as you’d like. Give him the movements of Hamlet.

MIYAUCHI: Very well. Shinzō, this is your last chance. Even if you can't internalize Hamlet, imitate him. Here's how American Edwin Booth played him in New York, the greatest Hamlet ever! Try to copy, hand and foot, will you?

SHINZŌ: (*Bowing, head to floor, with great deference.*) Yes.

(MIYAUCHI goes to center stage and stands alongside SHINZŌ/HAMLET.)

MIYAUCHI: Hamlet enters stage right . . . (SHINZŌ/HAMLET quickly goes there and tries to duplicate MIYAUCHI's instructions but cannot help moving in what, in this context, seems a comically grotesque kabuki style). . . Bows his head a little. Right hand on his chest. Left hand . . . on chin . . . slowly drags his feet . . . sits down and looks at audience. . . . (MIYAUCHI cannot refrain from playing the role of HAMLET himself, getting into the skin of Booth's HAMLET.) No! . . . Booth's Hamlet sees nothing. He's looking inside himself—he's melancholy. Your eyes aren't sad at all. Hand on forehead . . . a lock of hair falls over his brow. . . . He doesn't notice. . . . He rises up from depths of silence. (*In English:*) "To be or not to be, that is the question." (MIYAUCHI is dumbfounded to find he is neither in America nor with Booth.)

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*In kabuki style.*)

To be or not to be, that is the question.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And by opposing, end them. (*Exaggerated mie pose.*)

(MIYAUCHI, with bowed head, is about to leave the stage. SHICHŌ rushes to stop him.)

KAN'YA: Baron.

SHINZŌ: Don't go.

MIYAUCHI: Have that dress sent to my residence.

SHINZŌ: Let me try once more.

MIYAUCHI: This is Japan. Far from America and Europe. Exchange forgiveness with me, Morita. My failure come not upon thee, nor thine on me!

(MIYAUCHI leaves right. SHINZŌ collapses in despair. GENNOSUKE helps SHINZŌ get to his feet.)

GENNOSUKE:

“Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.”

SHINZŌ: Quit it. It's no time to joke.

GENNOSUKE: I'm not. Why don't we keep on rehearsing?

KAN'YA: It's all over. Baron Miyauchi was our backer. Without him there's no money, no play. The curtain has drawn on my life's greatest gamble.

KIDŌ: Not just yet. The premiere's tomorrow. If it's a smash, you'll block Horitani's takeover.

KAKŌ: Horitani who?

KIDŌ: An Osaka producer. He's trying to break into Tokyo.

TOKUJIRŌ: Nonsense. Since Tokugawa times there've been twelve Morita Kan'yas. He won't let anyone from Osaka touch him.

KAN'YA: Alas, I'm not the Morita Kan'ya of those days when you were a great star.

UMEMATSU: Ten years ago the Shintomi-za was put up as collateral for a loan from moneylender Chiba.

KIDŌ: Chiba is rich, but he knows nothing about theatre. He left the management of the Shintomi-za to Morita-san. Now he's fed up with his losses, won't put up a dime for a new production. They say he's thinking of selling the Shintomi-za.

GENNOSUKE: So that's why *Hamlet* wasn't announced and *Chūshingura* was!

UMEMATSU: Before *Hamlet*'s a hit, Horitani would like to snap up the Shintomi-za for its debts. So that was Master Morita's battle plan.

KAN'YA: As we're about to open, we were on the roof, and someone took the ladder away.

SHINZŌ: If only I'd said my lines better.

SHICHŌ: So, “new” theatre and *Hamlet* were just fish bait. Master Morita planned on catching us young actors the way the Kabuki-za lured Danjūrō and Kikugorō away from him. We're pawns! Father! Let's go home. (*Moves right to exit.*)

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: Ophelia! Wait. The play is not over yet. King, come hither. Sit here beside me.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: Gertrude, I do your bidding.

SHICHŌ: Father!

KAKŌ: No actor worth his name quits at a rehearsal. Ophelia's fair face would fade away to no avail. (*As GERTRUDE:*)

Sweets to the sweet, Farewell.

I'd hoped thou shouldst have been Hamlet's wife.

I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,

And not have strewed thy grave.

TOKUJIRŌ: Yoshizawa-ya, they can't bury this young Ophelia yet.

KAKŌ: Sorry, King.

TOKUJIRŌ: (*To SHICHŌ.*) Son! For thine especial safety which we do tender, we dearly grieve. If you leave this Shintomi-za, I'll have no choice but to disown you.

SHICHŌ: Father, the baron has deserted *Hamlet*. There's no hope of opening, so why rehearse?

TOKUJIRŌ: Because the king commands it.

SHICHŌ: "Claudius" has possessed you.

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: Forsooth, my king!

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: Gertrude. Prithce.

*(The two old actors pose primly as the King and Queen. The wooden clappers are struck slowly, then more rapidly as the pair moves regally toward the throne platform.)*

KIDŌ: Morita-san, I sneaked into the Shintomi-za not just to see the baron's Western novelty, but because I wanted to see your kind of "true" theatre. Danjūrō and Kikugorō deserted you for the Kabuki-za, but you've still got Shinzō, Gennosuke, Umematsu, Kakō . . . splendid artists all. And instead of old *kabuki* plays, you have Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*. You have always spun your plays like a spider's web in sunlight . . . shimmering, colorful. That is why I hope one day to write plays myself.

GENNOSUKE: If only we had money to redeem costumes and props from the hock shop.

UMEMATSU: Why look at me?

KAN'YA: Never mind. Old Tome! Take down that curtain.

TOME: Shogun Grant's curtain?

KAN'YA: Ex-President Grant will forgive me. He's saving *Hamlet*.

TOME: Yes, sir. (*Reluctantly takes the curtain down.*)

KAN'YA: Back to work! Narita-ya, take it from your soliloquy.

SHINZŌ: (*Long pause as he tries to begin, only to collapse from nervousness.*

*He is hysterical with fear.*) I can't move my arms and legs. *Hamlet* is beyond me.

KAN'YA: (*Soothingly.*) No, it isn't. Remember your Yuranosuke, *Chūshingura*, Act 7, the scene in the teahouse, and your rave reviews? (See Color Plate 3.)

GENNOSUKE: Where you acted Yuranosuke, hid your vow of revenge against Moronao, and pretended to carouse crazily in the pleasure district. You surpassed Danjūrō.

SHINZŌ: Stop. He might hear you.

KAN'YA: You plunged into lust, outside; inside your gut, you thought of revenge.

SHINZŌ: Yuranosuke is not wood and stone. On one side, he's sworn to revenge; on the other, he whores like mad.

KAN'YA: That's it! Take Yuranosuke as a model for Hamlet's soliloquy.

SHINZŌ: Model?

KAN'YA: Yuranosuke and Hamlet both hide their plans for revenge. They are "actors." Yuranosuke pretends he's whoring . . . Hamlet fakes madness in front of Claudius.

TOKUJIRŌ: Wow! So the Englishman Shakespeare, after reading *Chūshingura*, wrote *Hamlet*?

UMEMATSU: Shakespeare could have read Japanese.

KAN'YA: Yuranosuke and Hamlet. What's at the bottom of their hearts? The Enya Hangan clan and Denmark were torn apart by events. Resentment against the enemy and revenge became a two-headed snake within their souls. Yuranosuke plunges into debauchery so as to hoodwink Moronao's spies. He becomes an actor who can't step out of his role. At the same time he can't forget revenge. Yuranosuke never speaks what's at the bottom of his heart, but you expressed it cleverly in your acting.

SHINZŌ: Yes.

KAN'YA: Yuranosuke's surrounded by women, but Hamlet is alone during his soliloquy. He steps out of his play-acting, being crazy in front of Claudius, and speaks what he deeply feels. He speaks not only for Hamlet but for every one of us who puts one foot in front of the other to walk and who stops to wonder why we go on living. Why do we "grunt and sweat under a weary life. But that the dread of something after death"? Same with me. For "new" theatre and the Shintomi-za, I have suffered patronization from backers, been shamed by loan sharks, insulted by the public and the critics. I have wanted to sink into sleep . . . but I'd still dream of theatre. So the soliloquy speaks for Hamlet's soul. But not just his. It speaks for Yuranosuke, for me, for Shinzō, and tomorrow he'll be speaking for all the audience's souls too! Everyone's soul. (See Color Plate 4.)

*(The stage slowly darkens with spotlights on KAN'YA and SHINZŌ/HAMLET. SHINZŌ/HAMLET walks to the front of the stage and softly speaks. His manner is still that of the kabuki actor, but his delivery is deeply sincere and clearly focused. Low, rapid drumbeats accompany it.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:  
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
 And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep,  
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
 The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wish'd.

*(Blackout while SHINZŌ/HAMLET's lines go on. When the lights come up again, it is Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 2, a room in Elsinore Castle. SHINZŌ/HAMLET stands at center and the FIRST PLAYER kneels nearby. SHINZŌ/HAMLET holds his cloak in his hand.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. Pray you avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER: I warrant.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the words to the action.

FIRST PLAYER: I warrant.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Go, make you ready.

*(Exit the FIRST PLAYER right. Enter UMEMATSU/POLONIUS to the center.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: How now, my lord? Will the king hear this piece of work?

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: And the queen too, and that presently.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Bid the players make haste.

KAN'YA: What's that shadow over there?

UMEMATSU: Nothing. . . . Your eyes fool you. The moneylender's clerk has gone. Those men there are actors for *Hamlet's* play-within-a-play.

*(The beating of the clappers is heard throughout this exchange, along with the low sound of a flute.)*

KAN'YA: The play before the king. . . . For a moment my eyes dimmed. The emperor and empress were here, like ten years ago. Ghosts, shadows from the past.

UMEMATSU: Are you all right? . . . Why not go out and have a beef-steak for a change? . . . That's my cue!

*(During the last few lines, a red cloth has been placed on the floor, center stage, flanked by two small standing lamps.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: What ho, Horatio!

GENNOSUKE/HORATIO: Here, sweet lord, at your service.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

GENNOSUKE/HORATIO: O my dear lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

Nay, do not think I flatter,  
For what advancement may I hope from thee  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits  
To feed and clothe thee?

*(SHINZŌ/HAMLET and GENNOSUKE/HORATIO unconsciously speak together more as lovers than intimate friends. SHICHŌ pretends not to see this, but he is much bothered.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

There is a play tonight before the king.  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death.  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note,  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgements join  
In censure of his seeming.

GENNOSUKE/HORATIO:

Well, my lord.  
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: They are coming to the play. I must be idle. Get you a place.

*(Enter TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS, KAKŌ/GERTRUDE, UMEMATSU/POLONIUS and SHICHŌ/OPHELIA.)*

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: How fares our cousin Hamlet?

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: (*Pretending to be mad.*) Excellent, i'faith, of the chameleon's dish. I eat the air, promise-crammed. You cannot feed capons so.

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: I have nothing with this answer. These words are not mine.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: No, nor mine now. . . . (*To UMEMATSU/POLONIUS:*) My lord, you played once i'the university, you say?

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: What did you enact?

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: I did enact Kudayū. I was killed in Act 7, the teahouse scene. Yuranosuke killed me.

SHINZŌ: No! Your line is, "I did enact Julius Caesar. Brutus killed me."

UMEMATSU: Who's Julius? Who's Caesar? Tokyo audiences don't know them. But everyone knows my famous role.

KAN'YA: I give up. Old spectators naturally prefer Kudayū. Change it.

UMEMATSU: Narita-ya, once again.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: And what did you enact?

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: (*Puts on Kudayū's spectacles and unrolls a long cloth in place of a long, scrolled letter.*) I did enact Kudayū. In Act 7, the teahouse scene, Yuranosuke killed me.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: You mean "Iranosuke," your life isn't necessary? Be the players ready?

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: Good. They stay upon your patience.

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: No, good mother, here's metal more attractive. (*Goes next to SHICHŌ/OPHELIA.*) Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

(*SHINZŌ/HAMLET lies down on SHICHŌ/OPHELIA's lap. GENNO-SUKE looks at it disgustedly.*)

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: No, my lord.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: (*Aside to TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS.*) O ho! Do you mark that?

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: I mean, my head upon your lap.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: Ay, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Do you think I meant country matters?

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: I think nothing, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: What is, my lord?

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Nothing.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: You are merry, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Who, I?

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: Ay, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? For look you how cheerfully my mother looks and my father died within's two hours.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: So long? O heavens, die two months ago and not forgotten yet! Then there's hope a great man's memory may out-live his life half a year.

*(Enter from right a PLAYER wearing formal kataginu vest and kimono. He kneels and bows formally above the red carpet.)*

PLAYER:

For us and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

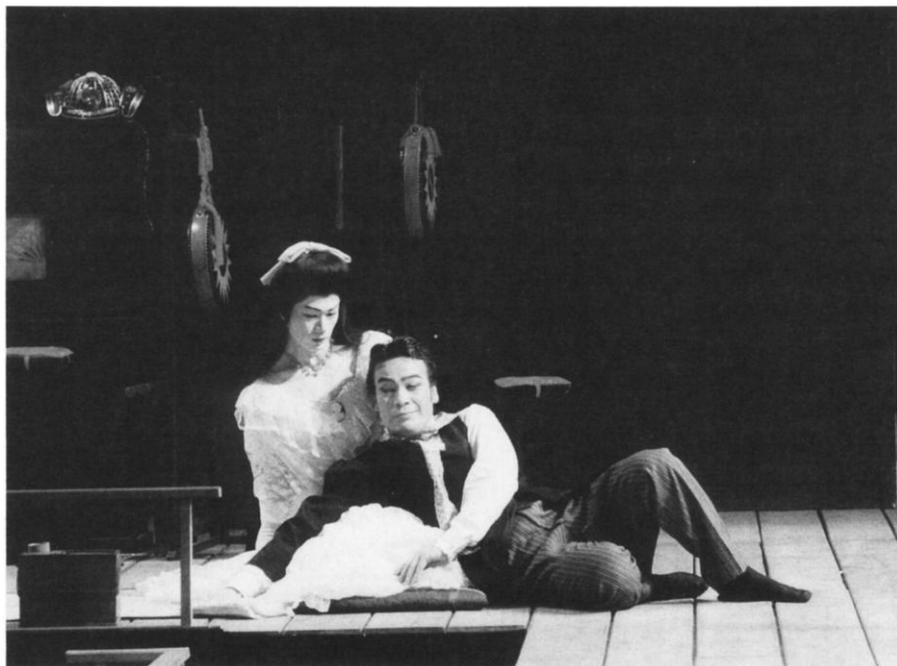


FIGURE 11. "SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" *Left to right:* Shichō (Isogai Makoto), Shinzō (Fujiki Takashi). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1994, Tōkyō Globe-za.

(KAN'YA casually walks up to GENNOSUKE, who is irritated to see SHICHŌ acting as OPHELIA, the role he wanted, in the love scene with HAMLET.)

KAN'YA: (*As if half-speaking to himself.*) Kinokuni-ya, remember? At the command performance I decided on you as the Shintomi-za's next leading *onnagata*.

GENNOSUKE: (*Sound of drums and flute in the background.*) I was making up as Okaru, when I well understood how noble and elegant you had made theatre—worthy of refined spectators. But still, I knew I would wander elsewhere.

KAN'YA: Gennosuke.

GENNOSUKE: I left you because theatrical theatre vanished from the Shintomi-za stage.

KAN'YA: That command performance was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Emperor in full dress. Empress in a gorgeous white gown. Foreign Minister Inoue, and other members of the imperial family, ministers, wives, proceeding to the Grand Circle.

(*The PLAYERS of the dumbshow enter slowly from right. The costumes and makeup of the King and Queen suggest the Heian period, as in The Tale of Genji. That of the murderer, LUCIANUS, is more kabuki-like, with his glistening brocade robe, wide hakama, and kumadori makeup. Using kabuki movements, they enact "The Murder of Gonzago" as KAN'YA, looking away from the stage behind him, speaks.*)

KAN'YA: That day I was at the curtain. *Chūshingura*, Act 4, Enya Hangan's seppuku scene. Danjūrō IX, as Yuranosuke, stood at the end of the *hanamichi*, eyes closed as if praying. Center stage in pale death clothes, Kikugorō V prepared to stab himself.

(*The audience clearly hears with KAN'YA the amplified voice of a gidayū narrator and speech from the actors in the command performance in KAN'YA's imagination, Act 4 of Chūshingura, in which YURANOSUKE runs to the place where ENYA HANGAN is committing seppuku.*)

NARRATOR: Holds the sword upside down and thrusts with his left hand.

(*The swishing sound of a hanamichi curtain opening.*)

NARRATOR: Ōboshi Yuranosuke, opening the sliding door from the

corridor, runs into the room and prostrates himself before his master at the moment he sees him.

*(The sound of beating footsteps as YURANOSUKE runs along the hanamichi toward the stage.)*

YURANOSUKE (VOICE): Ōboshi Yuranosuke has just arrived.

LORD ENYA (VOICE): Oh, is that you, Yuranosuke?

YURANOSUKE (VOICE): At your service.

LORD ENYA (VOICE): How I've waited.

*(The villain, LUCIANUS, enters.)*

GENNOSUKE: *(Pointing to LUCIANUS.)* Master Morita. That's you!

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

He poisons the king to usurp the throne.

GENNOSUKE: You killed theatrical theatre. Maybe it is vulgar, but audiences have loved it for centuries. You killed it to toady to big shots, gentlemen fresh back from the West. You drank Western wines with them. You were a Master of Theatre but you killed the old theatre with your innovations.

SHICHŌ/OPHELIA: Look, the king rises.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: What? Frightened with false fire?

KAKŌ/GERTRUDE: Lights, lights.

UMEMATSU/POLONIUS: Give o'er the play!

*(KAN'YA falls with his hand over his chest.)*

TOKUJIRŌ/CLAUDIUS: Give me some light. Away!

*(Exit TOKUJIRŌ, supported by people, while KAN'YA is carried to a sajiki. Music becomes louder and the color of the lights changes, bathing the stage in blue.)*

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: *(Oblivious of KAN'YA's condition.)* O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive? Upon the talk of the poisoning?

GENNOSUKE/HORATIO: I did very well note him.

SHINZŌ/HAMLET:

Ah ha! Come, some music! Come, the recorders!

For if the King like not the comedy,

Why then belike, he likes it not, perdy.  
Come, some music.

(HORITANI BUNJIRŌ enters. A man of thirty, he wears a fine Western suit not appropriate for him. He speaks with a strong Osaka accent. SHINZŌ/HAMLET continues to perform his Shakespearean role for several lines.)

HORITANI: May I have a word?

SHINZŌ/HAMLET: Sir, a whole history.

HORITANI: I wish to see Morita Kan'ya. . . . He's at today's rehearsal.

SHINZŌ: (*Lights back to normal.*) I'm head of the troupe, Ichikawa Shinzō. We are very busy . . .

HORITANI: I know outsiders are not allowed, but I'm special. Where's Morita?

SHINZŌ: He'll see you after the rehearsal. Please wait.

HORITANI: The Shintomi-za owner does not wait. I am Horitani Bunjirō from Osaka. I have just now bought the Shintomi-za from Chiba.

SHICHŌ: So, the rumor's true.

(KAN'YA enters, patiently enduring his pain.)

KAN'YA: We met three years ago in Kyoto.

HORITANI: That time you bested me. Now it's my turn. Here's the deed transferring ownership of the Shintomi-za to me.

KAN'YA: I never thought you could raise that much money.

HORITANI: Tomorrow, your Western innovation *Hamlet* might be a success and I was afraid Chiba might change his mind about selling the Shintomi-za. So I hastened to buy it today.

UMEMATSU: Master Morita?

KAN'YA: Sorry, you paid the interest for nothing.

SHINZŌ: Horitani-san. At least allow us to open *Hamlet* tomorrow.

HORITANI: No. *Hamlet* might be well received because of its novelty, but it'll never fill the house. Western drama will always flop in Japan. Tomorrow we'll present *Chūshingura* just as the sign outside says. Shinzō's Yuranosuke, Shichō's Okaru.

KAN'YA: We've come so far with *Hamlet*, my very last dream for new theatre, for the Shintomi-za. Please let us present it.

HORITANI: I take no risks. You always mess up somehow. Your Shintomi-za is a pyramid of debts.

KAN'YA: Yes, but my debts produced plays . . . ideas.

HORITANI: New theatre can't be produced in so slapdash a fashion.

Shinzō and Shichō are under contract to me. I pay well.

SHICHŌ: After *Hamlet* I return to Danjūrō's troupe. It's settled.

HORITANI: Hanjūrō! I told you to negotiate with the actors before I came.

HANJŪRŌ: (*Speaking with an Osaka accent.*) Sorry to have let you down.

KAN'YA: (*To Horitani.*) You knew that tomorrow was *Hamlet*, not *Chūshingura*. That's why you rushed to buy up the Shintomi-za. Hanjūrō ratted. You traitor.

HANJŪRŌ: Don't call me a traitor. After all, my career started in Osaka.

KAN'YA: I should never have let an Osaka rat join my troupe.

HANJŪRŌ: What's wrong with Osaka? Tokyo people always call us rats . . . rats.

KAN'YA: Don't use Osaka dialect with me.

HANJŪRŌ: Why not? *Chūshingura* originated in Osaka. It was written in Osaka, premiered as an Osaka puppet show. Act 4 is in nearby Kyoto where Okaru and Kampei live. Act 7 is in Kyoto; so is Act 9. Yuranosuke lives in Kyoto. Tokyo actors always mock me for my accent, saying they can't understand my lines as Kampei. But I'm from down there after all.

HORITANI: Enough!

HANJŪRŌ: I couldn't take any more. You treated me like an under-study. Just when I thought I was to play two handsome roles, Enya Hangan and Kampei in *Chūshingura*, you made me one ghost in Hamlet. That's when Master Horitani approached me.

KAN'YA: Kinokuni-ya, where are you going?

GENNOSUKE: Back to my little Miyato-za on the wrong side of town. I have no place here.

KAN'YA: No place for me either. Since 1661, after two hundred and forty years—twelve generations of Moritas—I now surrender my castle. (*Becomes YURANOSUKE abandoning his castle in the fourth act of Chūshingura.*) "From generation to generation, world without end . . ."

TOME: Me too! "From generation to generation . . ."

KAN'YA: After working day and night for years at the Shintomi-za, I now say "Farewell." Tome, thank you. You helped me much.

SHINZŌ: Horitani-san . . . and Waka-Hōrai. Thank you for offering me work, but I've decided to leave. I know where I belong.

GENNOSUKE: Narita-ya, in my little Miyato-za?

SHINZŌ: I might not play Hamlet there, but next time I play *Chūshingura*, Yuranosuke will be totally different from before. After learning Hamlet, I'll play a new Yuranosuke for true lovers of theatre.



FIGURE 12. “KAN’YA: No place for me either.” *Left to right:* Umematsu (Hayashi Akio), Kan’ya (Uchida Minoru), Tokujirō (Kubo Kōichi), Shichō (Isogai Makoto), Gennosuke (Hayashi Tsuguki). *Kanadehon Hamlet*, 1997, Tōkyō Geijutsu Gekijō.

GENNOSUKE: It’s a crummy little dump in a park.

SHINZŌ: No matter, just so long as I can play a new kind of theatre. I don’t mind, little, old, new. Master Morita, when someday I play Hamlet, will you come?

KAN’YA: Of course . . . just to see a new kind of theatre. (See Color Plate 5.)

*(KAN’YA crumbles to the ground. UMEMATSU supports him. KAN’YA rises to his feet.)*

KAN’YA:

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,  
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—  
But let it be.

*(As the clappers sound, KAN’YA imagines he hears the voices and applause of an audience. He acknowledges the applause, then collapses. UMEMATSU holds him up as the others gather around.)*

TOME: Theatre master.

KAN'YA: I am dead. The rest is silence. (*Dies. SHINZŌ neatly arranges his body. The lights dim.*)

KIDŌ: Goodnight, Morita Kan'ya. May a dream of new drama lead you to peace above! (*In English.*) Goodnight, sweet prince.

HORITANI: (*Standing up left on the platform, where he dominates the scene.*)

Bear him to the stage;

For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most capable Director of the National  
Theatre; and for his passage

The music and the rites

Speak loudly for him.

*(Drums beat and wooden clappers sound while all the actors raise the body of KAN'YA and move to the front of the stage. Blackout.)*

## NOTES

1. The English translation of the play is based on the live simultaneous translation provided by Faubion Bowers for the New York production. Stage directions were translated by David W. Griffith and Hori Mariko from the script of the play's first production. Additional stage directions, based on a videotape of a Tokyo performance, were added by the editor of *Asian Theatre Journal*.

2. *Rokumeikan Ibun* was awarded the Commissioner for Culture Prize for Dramatic Creation in 1988 and was produced in 1988 and 1990. *Kanadehon Hamlet* received the Yomiuri Prize in 1993.

3. Keene (1971), Dickens (1876), and Inoue (1910) are translations of the full puppet theatre text. Brandon (1982) contains a *kabuki* version adapted by Nakamura Matagorō II and James R. Brandon. There are also selected *kabuki*-based scenes in Richie and Watanabe (1963).

4. The play is inspired by Kawatake (1972), which provides a detailed analysis of *Hamlet's* first production in Japan. Ueno (1995) contains Murakami Takashi's chronological overview tracing the history of the reception of *Hamlet* and Shakespeare in modern Japan.

5. Kimura (1943) is a detailed biography of Morita Kan'ya.

6. Bach (1995) discusses Kanya's reaction to the Meiji government's policy.

7. Kobitsu (1988) contains a detailed account of the play's production. Clark (1993) is a study based on the illustrations of the play.

8. Literary "new theatre," Japanese modern drama, was established in the 1900s. It was strongly influenced by modern Western theatre and tried to differentiate itself from traditional theatre, especially *kabuki*.

9. *Genroku Chūshingura* by Mayama Seika is an example of a *shin kabuki*-style *Chūshingura*.

10. *Shingeki Chūshingura* by Fukuda Yoshiyuki was produced by the Haiyū-za. *Inuno Adauchi*, by Inoue Hisashi, was produced by the Komatsu-za.

11. As *kabuki* actors of the Edo period were considered too lowly to be allowed surnames, they used *yagō*, a name often related to a place with which the family had a deep connection, or the name of an ancestor's occupation, and so on. The *yagō* is often used as a nickname and, during the performance, is used by the audience as a word of encouragement shouted to the actor. In the translation, actors are often referred to by their *yagō*. When this occurs, the actor's regular stage name is included in parentheses for clarity, but these interpolations are not meant to be spoken.

12. The Kimura-ya bakery innovated *anpan*, buns filled with sweet bean paste, and presented them to the Meiji emperor. The vendors—dressed in frock coats and top hats, beating on a Western drum—were very popular.

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