

Chorus. Dance on, sweet maiden, through the happy hours!

Dance on, sweet maiden, while the magic flow'rs
Crowning thy tresses flutter in the wind
Rais'd by thy waving pinions inkertwin'd!
Dance on! for ne'er to mortal dance 'his giv'n
To vie with that sweet dance thou bring'st from
heav'n:

And when, cloud-soaring, thou shalt all too soon
Homeward return to the full-shining moon,
Then hear our prayers, and from thy bounteous
hand

Pour sev'nfold treasures on our happy land;
Bless ev'ry coast, refresh each parting field,
That earth may still her proper increase yield!
But ah! the hour, the hour of parting rings!
Caught by the breeze, the fairy's magic wings
Heav'nward do bear her from the pine-clad shore,
Past Ukishima's widely-stretching door,
Past Ashidaka's heights, and where are spread
Th' eternal snows on Fusiyama's head,—
Higher and higher to the azure skies,
Will wand'ring vapours hide her from our eyes!

The Classical Poetry of the Japanese

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The Death-Stone.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE SPIRIT OF THE "FLAWLESS JEWEL MAIDEN."
THE BUDDHIST PRIEST GEN'WOU.
THE CHORUS.

SCENE.—The moor of Nasu, in the province of Shimotsuke, some ninety miles to the north of Yedo.

Priest. What through the vapours of the fleeting scene
Obscure the view of pilgrims here below?
With heart intent on heav'nly things unseen,
I take my journey through this world of woe.*

I am a priest, and Gen'wou is my name. Ever fixed
in the seat of contemplation, I had long groaned over
my imperfection in that which of all things is the
most essential† But now I see clear, and, waving in
my hand the sacerdotal besom, go forth to gaze upon
the world. After sojourning in the province of Michi-
noku, I would now fain go up to the capital, and there
pass the winter season of meditation. I have crossed
the river Shirakaba, and have arrived at the moor of
Nasu in the province of Shimotsuke.

* The original of this stanza and of the next is extremely obscure, and the English translation is therefore merely tentative.
† Viz., spiritual insight.

Alas ! the vapours of the fleeing scene
 Obscure the view of pilgrims here below ;
 Strike out the hope in heav'nly things unseen,
 What guide were left us through this world of
 woe ?

Spirit. Ah ! rest not under the shadow of that stone !
Priest. What then ? Is there any reason for not
 resting under the shadow of this stone ?

Spirit. Yes ; this is the Death-Stone of the moor
 of Nasu ; and not men only, but birds even and beasts
 perish if they but touch it.

Seek not to die ! What ! hast thou not heard tell
 Of Nasu's Death-Stone and its fatal spell ?

I entreat thee draw not nigh unto it !
Priest. What is it, then, that maketh this stone so
 murderous ?

Spirit. 'Tis that into it, in the olden time, entered
 the spirit of her who was called the "Flawless Jewel
 Maiden," concubine to the Emperor Toba.

Priest. Into this stone ? on this far-distant road ?
 Methought the palace was the girl's abode.

Spirit. Verily it cannot be without reason that the
 story hath been handed down from the olden time.

Priest. Thine appearance and thy language seem to
 assure me that the tale is not unknown to thee.

Spirit. No ! no ! I know it but in outline. Fleeting
 as the dew is the memory of the maiden's fate.

Spirit. Erst through the king's abode
Priest. Proudly the maiden strode,
Spirit. Now on this desolate road
Priest. Her ghost doth dwell,
Spirit. Broods o'er the fated land,
Priest. And ev'ry pilgrim band
Spirit. Falls 'neath her murderous hand,
Priest. Wielding the spell !

I.

Chorus. The Death-Stone stands on Nasu's moor
 Through winter snows and summer heat ;
 The moss grows grey upon its sides,
 But the foul demon haunts it yet.

Chill blows the blast : the owl's sad choir
 Hoots hoarsely through the meaning pines ;
 Among the low chrysanthemums
 The skulking fox, the jackal whines,
 As o'er the moor the autumn light declines.*

II.

Chorus. Fair was the girl,—beyond expression fair ;
 But what her country, who her parents were,
 None knew. And yet, as in her native place,
 She proudly dwelt above the Cloudy Space,†

* This stanza is an adaptation of part of an ode by the Chinese poet
 Pei Kù-yih.

† i.e., in the Mikado's palace. The courtiers are called "the people
 above the clouds."

So sweetly deck'd by nature and by art,
The monarch's self soon clasp'd her to his heart.

Spirit. One day th' Imperial Majesty saw fit
To put to proof the Jewel Maiden's wit.

Chorus. Nor did she fail in ought: grave Buddhist lore,
Confucian classics of the days of yore,
Cipango's bards, the poets of Cathay,
And all the science the two realms display,—
She knew them all, nor did her answers fail
To tell of music all the wondrous tale.

Spirit. A mind so flawless in a form so fair
Deserv'd the name her lord then gave to her.

Chorus. Once the Mikado made a splendid feast
At the cool Summer Palace: ev'ry guest
That of accomplishments or wit could boast
Was bidden there,—a gay and brilliant host,
Like to the clouds, from out whose fleecy sphere
Th' imperial kindred, like the moon, shone clear.
But hark! what rumour mingles with the strains
Of liveliest music? See! the heav'nly plains
Are wrapp'd in clouds and darkness! Not a
star,—

The moon not risen yet: but from afar,
Heralded by the rustling of the show'r,
The wind comes howling through the festive
bow'r;
The lanterns are blown out: "A light! a light!"
Cry all the courtiers in tumultuous fright.

And lo! from out the Jewel Maiden's frame
There's seen to dart a weirdly lustrous flame!
It grows, it spreads, it fills th' imperial halls;
The painted screens, the costly pannell'd walls,
Ere the pale viewless damask of the night,
Sparkling stand forth as in the moon's full light.

Spirit. From that same hour the sov'reign monarch
pin'd.

Chorus. From that same hour the sov'reign monarch
pin'd

In dire disease, whose hidden cause to find
The court magician cast his curious spell,
And thus the fortune of the lots did tell:

"'Tis none but she, great Empror! without doubt
That harlot is the culprit: cast her out!
Expel the fiend, who, with insidious art,
The state to ravage, captivates thy heart!"
Thus spake the seer, and in an instant turn'd
The monarch's love to hate. The sorceress,
spurn'd,
Resumes her proper shape, and speeds away
To Nasu's moor, there dwelling to this day.

Priest. Thou that hast deigned to tell me this long
history, who may'st thou be?

Spirit. Wherefore any longer conceal it? The demon
that of old dwelt in the breast of the "Flawless Jewel
Maiden," and that now inhabits the Death-Stone of the
moor of Nasu is none other than myself.

Priest. Ah, well-a-day! Strange is it, but true, that the soul sunk lowest in the depths of wickedness will rise highest on the pinnacle of virtue. I will bestow on thee the priestly robe and begging-bowl.* But, prithee, reveal thyself to mine eyes in thy proper shape.

Spirit. Alas! what shame is now my portion!

In the garish light of day
I hide myself away,

Like pale Asamā's † fires:

With the night I'll come again,
Confess my guilt with pain
And new-born pure desires.

Chorus. Dark will be the night;

But her red lustrous light

Ne'er needs the moon.

"Wait! fear not!" she cries,
And from the hermit's eyes
Fades 'neath the stone.

[The Spirit vanishes.

Priest. 'Tis said of stocks and stones they have no soul. Yet what signifieth the text: "Herbs and trees, stones and rocks, shall all enter into Nirvâna," † save that from the beginning a divine essence dwells within them? How much more, then, if I bestow on this un-

* For a priest to bestow his own robe on a favourite disciple is a practice of which the founder of Buddhism himself is said to have set the example.

† An active volcano situated in the province of Shinano.

‡ A quotation from the "Hokkekyô," or "Lotus of the Law."

happy creature the priestly robe and begging-bowl, must not her attainment of Nirvâna be placed beyond a doubt? Wherefore, with offerings of flowers and of burning incense, I recite the scriptures with my face turned toward the stone, crying:

Spirit of the Death-Stone, I conjure thee! what was it in a former world that did cause thee to assume in this so foul a shape? *

Tarry not! away! away!

From this very hour shalt thou through mine intercessions obtain Nirvâna,

From this very hour shall they gain for thee the virtues of a saint.

Hear me! hear me!

[The stone is rent asunder and the Demon issues from it.

Spirit. In stones there are spirits,

In the waters is a voice heard:

The winds sweep across the firmament!

Chorus. Oh, horror! horror!

The Death-Stone's rent in twain,

And lo! the demon stands reveal'd!

Priest. Strange! passing strange!

The Death-Stone's rent in twain:

O'er moor and field

A lurid glare

* See *inŷra* text and footnote p. 175.

Burns fierce. There stands reveal'd
A fox,—and yet again
The phantom seems to wear
The aspect of a maiden fair!*

Spirit. No more the mystery can be conceal'd.

I am she who first, in Ind, was the demon to whom
Prince Harzoku paid homage at the murderous mound.†
In Great Cathay I took the form of Hanzhi, consort of
the Emperor Inwao; and at the court of the Rising
Sun I became the "Flawless Jewel Maiden," concubine
to the Emperor Toba.

Intent on the destruction of the imperial line, I
assumed the shape of a fair maiden, whose presence
caused the Jewel-body‡ to languish in disease. Already
was I gloating over the thought of the monarch's death,
when the court magician, Abe-no-Yasunari, directed
against me his powers of exorcism; he set up the
many-coloured symbols § of the gods upon the altar,
and gave them also into my hands:

[Here the Spirit commences a dance, which lasts till the end
of the play.]

* It is to be understood that the "Jewel Maiden" had originally been a fox, and that the moor of Nasu was her native place. Innumerable are the stories of foxes and cats assuming human shape in order to carry out their diabolical designs, and to this day the belief in the reality of such occurrences has firm hold on the minds of the less educated classes of the community.

† The translator has not been able to ascertain the details of the story to which reference is here made. The proper Chinese names of the Emperor and his consort mentioned in the next sentence are Yeo Wang and Pao Sze, who lived in the eighth century B.C. Pao Sze ruined her imperial master by her criminal luxury and folly.

‡ A phrase signifying the person of the Mikado.

§ See the note to p. 77.

Spirit. With fervent zeal the great magician prays:

Chorus. With fervent zeal the great magician prays,
And ev'ry tone with anguish and amaze
O'erpow'rs the witch, who with convulsive grasp
The holy symbols of the gods doth clasp,
And, heav'nward-scaring, flies o'er land and sea
To seek the shelter of this distant sea.

Spirit. Thereat the monarch issued his commands:

Chorus. Thereat the monarch issued his commands

To the two satraps of the neighboring lands: *

"Drive out," spake he, "the fiend of Nasu's
moor!"

And each true liege, to make his aim more sure,

For fivescore days on dogs his arrows tried,

For to the fox the dog is near allied: †

May we not thus trace back to that command

The custom of dog-shooting in our land? ‡

Then the two satraps, arm'd with bow and
spear,

And myriad horsemen brought from far and near,

* Viz., of the department of Mitsu and of the province of Kadzusa.

† In outward shape, not on account of the latter's possessing any of the supernatural power ascribed to the former.

‡ The sport of practising archery on dogs survived to the time of the revolution of 1868, and exhibitions of it (though rare) have been given since then, as on the occasion of the visit to Yedo of ex-President Grant in 1879. It is not cruel, at least in its modern form, as the arrows are blunted. The dogs are brought into a closed arena, and the marksmen are mounted, the horses enjoying the excitement as much as their riders. The members of the princely house of Satsuma have always been specially noted for their skill in dog-shooting.

Beat all the moor, surround its ev'ry part,
Whose rage to 'scape avails no magic art;
Swift fly the dogs, and swift the arrows fly
And, panting, stricken, I sink down and die.
But yet my ghost (though, like the morning dew
'Twas wrapt away from grosser human view)
Ceas'd not to haunt this distant desolate moor,
And from the Death-Stone wield its murderous
pow'r,—
Till thou, great Buddha! send'st thy priest this
way
To bid religion reassert her sway.
"I swear, O man of God! I swear," she cries,
"To thee whose blessing wafts me to the skies,
I swear a solemn oath, that shall endure
Firm as the Death-Stone standing on the moor,
That from this hour I'm virtue's child alone!"
Thus spake the ghoul, and vanished 'neath the
stone.*

* The good priest's blessing does not seem, however, to have been effectual; for a poisonous stream still issues from the Death-Stone thrice every day.

Life is a Dream.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE PILGRIM ROSEI. | A MINISTER.
AN ENVOY. | THE CHORUS.

SCENE.—Inn at the village of Kaftanu in China.

TIME.—Early in the eighth century.

Rosei. Lost in this pathless world of woe,
Where nothing is, but only seems,
How may the weary pilgrim know
His waking moments from his dreams?

My name is Rosei, and I dwell in the land of
Shiyoku.* Though born to mortal estate,† I have
hitherto idled my life away without so much as seek-
ing to tread the Buddhist path. But they tell me that
on Mount Yauhi in the land of Ibara there dwells a
learned and venerable priest; and to Mount Yauhi do

* Shiyoku and Ibara are the Japanese names of two feudal states in ancient China, whose proper Chinese appellations are respectively Shuh and Ch'u. Kaftanu, in like manner, should be Han-tan. This latter place, in the Japanese original, gives its name to the piece. But the expression "the pillow of Kaftanu" having become proverbial in the sense rendered by Calderon's famous title, the latter has been borrowed as both more euphonious and more expressive.

† A rare boon; for, according to Buddhist views, there are many more chances in favour of one's being born as a lower animal. He who obtains this inestimable privilege should show himself worthy of it by ardently following in the footsteps of the great reformer Shiyaka Muni.