

Abi no Ue

N 6514

## INTRODUCTION

*Abi-no-Ue* belongs to that division of the Fourth Group which is known as *onyō-mono* or 'vengeful ghost' pieces. Unlike other *onyō-mono* pieces, in which a woman, whose love was not requited during her life, turns after death into a vengeful ghost and attacks her rival, *Abi-no-Ue*<sup>1</sup> has for its heroine, Princess Rokujō,<sup>2</sup> who is alive, but whose jealousy assumes the form of a spirit which leaves her body.

In the *Tale of Genji*, Princess Rokujō, who becomes consort to the Crown Prince at the age of sixteen, is widowed at twenty. Ten years later she is courted by Genji, whose affection, however, is soon transferred to other women, beginning with Yūgao<sup>3</sup> mentioned in the play. The jealousy of Princess Rokujō is transformed into a vengeful ghost which steals out of her when she herself is not aware of it and haunts and torments *Abi-no-Ue*,<sup>4</sup> consort of Genji, whose servants once humiliated her in a quarrel over a standing-place for her coach at the festival of the Kamo Shrine—hence the frequent allusion to coaches and wheels in the text. The heroine appears in the noble figure of a princess in Part One and in Part Two she assumes a furious demon form. She is invisible to everyone except the sorceress Teruhi who appears in Part One and the holy man, Kohjiiri<sup>5</sup> of Yokawa, who appears in Part Two and performs the exorcism. Lady Aoi, persecuted to sickness by the demon, is not seen on the stage, but she is represented by an embroidered *karade* kimono which is placed folded at the front of the stage. So the

<sup>1</sup> *Abi* (hollyhock) is a personal name; *no*, a post-position meaning 'of'; and *Ue*, an honorific for the wife of a nobleman.

<sup>2</sup> The most jealous of the mistresses of Genji. Her jealous spirit left her body while she was unconscious and torments and kills two of her rivals, Yūgao and *Abi-no-Ue*.

<sup>3</sup> First loved by *Te-no-Chūjō*, a close friend of Genji, she gave birth to Tamakazura, a girl, and later became a mistress of Genji. She was suddenly killed by an evil spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Daughter of the Minister of the Left. She died after giving birth to Yūgiri, a girl.

<sup>5</sup> A Shinto shrine in Kyoto, comprising the Upper Shrine and the Lower Shrine situated about a mile apart on the river Kamo. After the transfer of the Imperial court to Kyoto (794 A.D.), the shrine rose in importance, the deities becoming guardians of the new capital. Eventually it came to be revered as one of the Three Shrines of Japan, the others being the Ise Shrines and the Iwashimizu Hachiman-gū Shrine. Its annual festival called the Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival) is still celebrated in grand style. The buildings are a typical example of the Heian shrine architecture.

<sup>6</sup> A holy man of Yokawa, which is one of the Three Quarters of Mt. Hiei. See *Saigyō*, p. 116, note 3. *Kohjiiri* ('lesser sage') is a title in the sect of mountain ascetics.

*kawade* may be regarded as one of the *dramatis personae* who never speaks, and when it is carried from the Mirror Room on to the stage by a stage-attendant, the Curtain is often raised just as in the case of actors. (When the musicians and stage-attendants enter, the Curtain is merely pushed aside.)

Part One is laid in the sick-room of Lady Aoi. Cure by faith and by physic has proved inefficacious for the suffering lady, and it is suspected that she is a victim of possession by some evil ghost. To ascertain whether it is the spirit of a living or a dead person, Teruhi, a sorceress, is ordered to perform a birch-bow divination.<sup>1</sup> Teruhi twangs a bow-string to call up the spirit. Attracted by the sound the wraith of Princess Rokujō appears. Finding her rival in love with Genji, her jealousy intensifies, and remembering past humiliations, she turns furious and beats the sick lady, trying at the same time to carry off her soul. A counter-measure is taken in Part Two. A holy man of Yokawa is sent for, who, suspending the rites which he has been performing, hurries to the scene. Though the demon keeps on resisting, the monk finally suppresses it by special incantations. A striking contrast is to be noted between the pathetic, beautiful figure of a love-lorn princess, a form in which the ghost appears in Part One, and the terrible and furious role of a demon it assumes in Part Two.

In Part One the *stife* wears a *daigan* (silver-painted-eye) mask, which represents a beautiful young noble lady; while in Part Two she wears a *Hanyu* mask with horns on the forehead and a wide-open mouth with golden teeth, representing the fiendish look of a jealous woman. Each mask requires a different costume. The change of costumes is made at the Stage-attendants' Seat, while the play goes on. In the meantime the holy man of Yokawa is sent for.

There seems to be some awkwardness in assigning some of the speeches in this play. The dialogue preceding the second chorus in Part One in which the *tsure* takes part should be a monologue of the *stife* and in the incantation scene in Part Two, the speech of the *waki*, which is mostly chanted by the chorus, is taken over three times by the *stife*. Though apparently illogical, this sort of practice is usual in Noh drama.

Author: Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443).

Source: *Genji Monogatari* (Tale of Genji), Vol. IX: *Lady Aoi*.

<sup>1</sup> A magical art by which a sorceress conjures up an evil spirit by twanging a bow-string and forces it to reveal itself or tell its intentions.

## AOI-NO-UE

### Persons

TERUHI, A SORCERESS	SHYOMAWA	<i>Tsure</i>
COURTIER OF THE EMPEROR	SHUJAKU	<i>Waki-tsure</i>
GHOST OF PRINCESS ROKUJŌ IN THE FORM OF A NOBLE WOMAN		
MESSENGER OF THE MINISTER OF THE LEFT		<i>Stife</i> in Part One
KOHJUTSU OF YOKAWA		<i>Kyōgen</i>
PRINCESS ROKUJŌ AS AN EVIL SPIRIT		<i>Waki</i>
		<i>Stife</i> in Part Two

### Place

Mansion of the Minister of the Left in Miyako

### Season

Indefinite

## PART ONE

A Stage-attendant places in the front part of the stage an embroidered kosode kimono which represents Lady Aoi on her sick-bed.

### I

TERUHI, wearing a *tsure* mask, wig, painted gold-patterned under-kimono, brocade outer-kimono and white broad-sleeved robe, and the COURTIER OF THE EMPEROR SHUJAKU, wearing a cavity cap, heavy silk kimono, lined hunting robe, and white broad divided skirt, appear, cross the Bridgeway and enter the stage.

TERUHI takes the Waki Seat and the COURTIER  
stands by the Shite Seat.

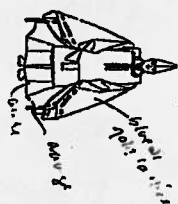
COURTIER I am a courier in the service of the Emperor Shujaku.<sup>1</sup> The demon that has possessed Lady Aoi, daughter of the Minister of the Left, is unyielding. His Lordship has invited most revered and eminent priests to perform secret and solemn rites of exorcism as well as ministrations of physic. All has been tried without avail.

I have been ordered to call in Teruhi, a sorceress, who is known far and wide for her skill in birch-bow divination. She is to ascertain by the bow whether the evil spirit is that of a living or dead person. I shall ask her.



TERUHI  
Cleansed be Heaven,  
Cleansed be Earth,  
Cleansed be all within and without,  
Cleansed be all Six Roots;<sup>2</sup>  
On a horse of dapple-grey,  
Swiftly comes a haunting spirit  
Tugging at the reins.

*Turns to TERUHI.  
With the azure  
music, TERUHI feels  
the knuckle kimono.  
Chants an incantation  
to call up an evil  
spirit.*



While the entrance music issei is being played, the GHOST OF LADY ROKUJO, wearing a silver-painted-eye mask, long wig, serpent-scale-patterned underkimono, embroidered outer-kimono in koshimaki style, and brocade outer-kimono in tsuhoori style, appears, advances on the Bridgeway and stops by the First Pine.

<sup>1</sup> A fictitious emperor, elder brother of Genji.  
<sup>2</sup> I.e. six organs of perception: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

ROKUJO  
isei  
Riding the Three Vehicles of Law  
Others may escape the Burning House.<sup>1</sup>  
Mine is but a cart

shidai  
In ruins like Yûgao's house;<sup>2</sup>  
I know not how to flee my passion.<sup>3</sup>

Like an ox-drawn cart, this weary world,  
Like an ox-drawn cart, this weary world  
Rolls endlessly on the wheels of retribution.

CHORUS  
jidori  
Rokujô  
sashi  
Like an ox-drawn cart, this weary world  
Rolls endlessly on the wheels of retribution.  
Like wheels of a cart for ever turning  
Are birth and death in all living things;  
Six Worlds<sup>4</sup> and Four Births<sup>5</sup>  
You must journey;  
Strive as you will, there is no escape.  
What folly to be blind  
To the frailty of this life,  
Like the banana stalk without a core,

Like the banana stalk without a core,



*Enters the stage and  
stands by the Shite  
Seat.*

<sup>1</sup> It is written in the Book of Parables of the Lotus Sutra that once a wealthy man had a fire break out in his house. He told his numerous children to run out quickly, but they were absorbed in their play and would not obey him. The father then told them that there was a cart drawn by sheep, another drawn by deer, and a third drawn by oxen, waiting for them at the door. Beguiled by the trick the children hastened out of the burning house. This parable describes Buddha's various doctrines for saving mankind.

<sup>2</sup> Genji's affection shifted to Yûgao, who was killed by Rokujô.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from a poem in the *Kemari-dono Shûihyôshû*.  
I know not how to escape  
My love-lorn thoughts.

This is like a broken-down cart,  
This sad heart of mine!

<sup>4</sup> I.e. six worlds (or realms) of heavenly beings, human beings, Asuras, beasts, hungry ghosts and hell, through which a soul is destined to transmigrate eternally according to the merits or demerits of its deeds in its successive lives. See also *Tôji*, p. 46, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> I.e. viviparous birth as with man, oviparous birth as with birds, birth from moisture as with worms, moqueuses, etc., and aparaññal birth, i.e. sudden birth without any apparent cause, born by spontaneous generation. This is the ancient Indian classification of all sentient beings.

Like a bubble on the water!<sup>1</sup>  
Flowers of yesterday are but a dream to-day.<sup>2</sup>  
How sad my fate!

Upon my sorrow others heap their spite.  
Now the ghost has come,  
Drawn by the birch-bow's sound,  
To find a moment of respite.

Ah, how shameful that even now  
The eyes of others I should shun  
As on that festive day.<sup>3</sup>

Though all night long I gaze upon the  
moon,

Though all night long I gaze upon the  
moon,

I, a phantom form, remain unseen by it.

Hence, by the birch-bow's upper end,

I shall stand to tell my sorrow,

I shall stand to tell my sorrow.

Whence comes the sound of the birch-bow,  
Whence comes the sound of the birch-bow?



As if listening, Te-  
sumi steps forward.

## 3

TERUHI  
ROKUYŌ  
TERUHI

Though by the mansion-gate I stand,  
Having no form, people pass me by.  
How strange! I see, though I know not  
who,

A lady gentle-born riding in a ragged  
coach,



Steps back and weeps.

<sup>1</sup> Allusion to the lines in the *Frendeliki-utake-uta* (雑歌集):

Our life, like a bubble of water, cannot long endure,  
And, like a banana stalk, has no hard core within.

<sup>2</sup> An echo from Po Chu-i's phrase:

The glory of yesterday declines to-day.

<sup>3</sup> See Introduction, p. 89. Refers to the day when Aoi-no-Ue and Rokujō quarrelled over the coach.



COURTIER

Rokujō

And one who seems a waiting-maid,  
Clutching the shaft of the ox-less coach  
And weeping, swathed in tears.  
Oh! pitiful sight!

Is this the evil spirit?

Who it is I now can guess. Tell me  
straight your name.

In this world

Where all like lightning passes,<sup>1</sup>

There should be none for me to hate

Nor no fate for me to mourn,

Why did I leave the way of truth?

Attracted by the birch-bow's sound,  
Here I now appear. Am I unknown to  
you yet?

I am the ghost of Princess

Rokujō.

In those olden days when

I walked the world,

On spring mornings I was

invited

To the flower feasts of the Palace,

And on autumn nights

I viewed the moon in the royal garden.

Gaily thus, I spent my days

In bright hues and scents.

Fallen in life, I am to-day no more

Than a morning-glory that withers with the  
rising of the sun.<sup>2</sup>



Stepping forward to-  
wards the Orienter,  
Rokujō speaks to  
Teruhi.



To the COURTIER.  
Turns to TERUHI  
who now is possessed by  
Rokujō.

<sup>1</sup> An echo from the *Manyōshū*: Man's life is as brief as a flash of lightning or a spark from flint.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from a poem in the *Manyōshū*:

I must get up at dawn to see  
The morning-glory in flower,  
Whose beauty will be gone  
Before the sun begins to shine.

My heart knows no rest from pain;  
Bitter thoughts grow like fern shoots  
Bursting forth in fields.

To vent my vengeance, here have I appeared.

Know you not in this life,  
Charity is not for others?

Be harsh to another,

Be harsh to another,

And it will recoil upon you.<sup>1</sup>

Why do you cry?

My curse is everlasting.

My curse is everlasting.

Oh, how I hate you!

I will punish you.

What shame!

For Princess Rokujō, gentle-born,

To vent your vengeance!

And act as one low-born.

Are you not ashamed?

Stop and say no more.

Say what you will, I must strike her now.

So saying I walk towards the pillow of Lady

Aoi and strike her.

Now that things have come to such a pass,

There is nothing more to do.

So saying, she walks towards the Princess

Rokujō.



Rokujō sits up and  
getting on the koto  
koto and stooping  
down, weeps. She starts  
at it again.



Walks to the koto  
and defiantly strikes it  
with the fan.



Rokujō

TERUHI

Rokujō

TERUHI

Rokujō

CHORUS



For this you will soon suffer.<sup>2</sup>

Present vengeance is the retribution<sup>2</sup>

Of past wrongs you did to me.

The flame of consuming anger

Scorches only my own self!

Do you not feel the fury of my anger?

You shall feel the fulness of its fury.

This loathsome heart!

This loathsome heart!

My unfathomable hate

Causes Lady Aoi to wail in bitter agony.

But long as is her life in this world,

Her love of the Shining Prince will never

end—

The Shining Prince, lovelier than a firefly

That flits across the marshland.

I shall be to him

A stranger, which I was once,

And I shall pass away

Like a dewdrop on a mugwort leaf.

When I think of this,

How bitter I feel!

Even were I living,

Our love is already an old tale,

Never to be revived even in a dream.

Yet all the while my longing grows the more

Till I am ashamed to see my love-torn self.

In my ragged coach, standing by her pillow,

I shall place the Lady Aoi



Rokujō pulls the  
koto over her and  
stooping, withdrawing to  
the stage-attendants' seat.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the lines in the *Dok-Skyō-on*:

Man's self is like dried-up wood,

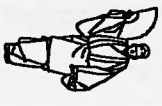
His anger a flaming fire;

Fire others fire destroy,

It consumes its own self first.



First her gaze on the  
koto.



And secretly bear her off,  
And secretly bear her off.

# PART TWO

1

*The MESSENGER OF THE MINISTER OF THE LEFT,  
wearing a striped kimono, sleeveless robe and trailing  
divided skirt, is seated at the Kyôgen Seat.*

COURTIER Is there any one here?

MESSENGER I am at your service.

COURTIER Lady Aoi who is possessed by the demon is  
grievously ill. Go! fetch the Kohijiri of Yokawa.

MESSENGER I understood that Lady Aoi who is  
possessed by the demon was very much better.  
Now I am told that she is worse than ever.  
Therefore I am ordered to go to Yokawa and  
bring back with me the Kohijiri. I must make  
haste.

I have arrived. If you please, I wish to be  
announced.

*The KOHJIRI, wearing a small round cap, brocade  
stole, heavy silk kimono, broad-sleeved robe, white broad  
divided skirt, and carrying a short sword, and a rosary  
of diamond-shaped beads, appears and advances on the  
Bridgeway and stops by the Third Pine.*

KOHJIRI Before the window of Nine Ideations,<sup>1</sup>

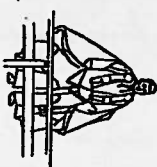
<sup>1</sup> I.e. perceptions by the five senses, the superceptive faculty (意識), the cogitating faculty (末那識),  
the all-comprehending mind (阿賴耶識), and the all-undivided consciousness (海峽意識),—technical terms in  
Buddhist psychology.

*Comes forward be-  
fore the COURTIER.*

*Goes back to the  
Shite Seat.*

*Goes to the First  
Pine and, turning to-  
wards the COURTIER, calls.*

On the seat of Ten Vehicles<sup>1</sup>  
I am filled with the waters of yaga;<sup>2</sup>  
Reflecting the Moon of Three Mysteries.  
Who is it that seeks admission?



MESSENGER I am a messenger from the Minister. Lady  
Aoi who is possessed by the demon is grievously  
ill, and I am commanded to ask you to come  
at once and perform the exorcism.

KOHJIRI Of late I have been engaged in performing  
special rites and cannot leave, but since it is a  
request from the Minister, I will come pres-  
ently. You return at once.

MESSENGER I will go before you.

I have returned, my lord, ac-  
companied by the Kohijiri.

COURTIER I am much obliged to you for  
coming.

KOHJIRI I received your message. Where  
is the sick lady?



COURTIER She is there in the gallery.

KOHJIRI I shall at once perform the exorcism.

COURTIER Pray do so.

KOHJIRI

The healing rites he now performs,  
Wearing his cloak of hemp,

*With the motto music  
the KOHJIRI picks up  
his shoes in front of  
the ORTHOSINE and goes  
towards the kneecle.*

In which, following the steps of En-no-  
Gyôja,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ten Vehicles leading to Nirvana.

<sup>2</sup> A Sanscrit word meaning 'union.' It is a spiritual practice to attain perfect union with truth by  
regulating one's mind and body.

<sup>3</sup> The originator of mountain asceticism. He was born in Kasurahi County, Yamato Province. His  
real name was En-no-Onuma, Gyôja being a title meaning 'sacred.' At the age of thirty-one, he abandoned  
the world and, retiring to Mt. Kasurahi, disciplined himself for thirty-four years, abstaining from all  
cooked food. As a result he acquired the magical art of commanding demons, and went about various  
provinces working miracles. He was called on a false charge to Izu Province in 697 and, receiving pardon,  
returned to Miyako in 703. He founded monasteries on Mt. Onime in Yamato Province.



He scaled the peak<sup>1</sup>  
 Symbolic of the sacred spheres  
 Of Taizō and Kongō,<sup>2</sup>  
 Brushing away the dew sparkling as  
 Seven Jewels,<sup>3</sup>  
 And a robe of meek endurance<sup>4</sup>  
 To shield him from defilements,  
 And fingering his red-wood beads,  
*Sarari, sarari*—so he chants a prayer.

2

The GHOST OF PRINCESS ROKUJŌ, having  
 changed the silver-painted-eye mask to a Hannya mask  
 and covered her head with her brocade outer-kinomo,  
 stands with a hammer-shaped staff in her hand behind  
 the KONRYŪ and fixes her gaze on him.

KONRYŪ *Namaku, Samanda, Basarada.*

ROKUJŌ Return at once, good monk, return at once.

Else will you be burdened with regret.

*Turn towards Roku-  
 jō and tries to tempt  
 Rokujō by his incanta-  
 tion, but she puts her*

<sup>1</sup> I.e. Omine. It lies about 40 miles south of Yoshino. Omine is a comprehensive name for a whole range of mountains extending over 30 miles. It contains several high peaks above 5,000 feet, which are included in the 'Yoshino-Kumano National Park.' During the months from April to September groups of ascetics under a qualified leader enter these mountains for practising austerities following the example of the founder, En-no-Gyōja. It is a rule to repeat the practice three times a year. Those who have accomplished many 'mountain-enterings' and have been initiated into the mysteries of the sect are regarded as master ascetics, and their prayers and invocations are said to possess supernatural powers. The Kōshiji in the present play was such an accomplished master.

<sup>2</sup> Tōshō-hai ('Womb-like, all-embracing Sphere') is a view of the whole sentient world with all states of existence from buddhas to devils as embraced in the infinite love of the Great Sun Buddha (*Mahāsūryam*), of whom all sentient beings are manifestations. The pictorial representation of this view is one of the most important *mandala* of Esoteric Buddhism, the other being that of Kōngō-hai. Kōngō-hai ('Diamond Sphere') represents the powers and works of the Great Sun Buddha's supreme wisdom, which is likened to a diamond, because as the latter is hard and unbreakable, and can break all other things, so the former is unflinching and can, moreover, destroy moral attachments.

<sup>3</sup> The Buddhist Paradise is said to be adorned with seven jewels (*varasura*). See *Tamamushi*, p. 7, note.

<sup>4</sup> Endurance of all insults and injuries from others. The *Lower Surin* says, 'The garment of Buddha is the spirit of meekness and forbearance.'



KONRYŪ However evil the evil spirit,  
 The mystic power of holy men  
 will never fail.  
 With these words he fingers once  
 again his sacred beads.

CHORUS  
 ROKUJŌ  
 CHORUS  
 ROKUJŌ  
 CHORUS  
 ROKUJŌ  
 CHORUS

Gōzanze Myōō of the East,  
 Gundari-yasha Myōō of the South,  
 Daiitoku Myōō of the West,  
 Kōngō-yasha Myōō  
 Of the North,  
 The most Wise Fudō Myōō of the Centre!—  
*Namaku, Samanda, Basarada,  
 Sunda, Makaroshana, Souatgyantara,  
 Takannan.*  
 "Who hears my teaching  
 Shall gain profundity of wisdom;  
 Who knows my mind  
 Shall gain the purity of Buddhahood."

*brocade outer-kinomo  
 around her waist and  
 takes a defiant attitude.  
 Then she kneels, sup-  
 porting herself with her  
 hammer-shaped staff.  
 Chants his incanta-  
 tion.*

*Rokujō, subdu-  
 ing her staff and  
 enters her ears.*

<sup>1</sup> Awe-inspiring kings (*Vajrapāṇi*) are incarnations of the Great Sun Buddha. They assume features of terrible anger in order to quell the rebellious spirits of man and demon. The following five are especially venerated in Esoteric Buddhism to which they belong. Gōzanze Myōō (*Tōshō-gyōshō*) sits in the east, he has three faces and eight arms, expressing great anger, and destroys the three vices of covetousness, anger and folly. Gundari-yasha (*Kōngō-jyōkyō*) Myōō sits in the south; he has one face and eight arms, and destroys all the furious spirits and devils. Daiitoku (*Tamashiki*) Myōō sits in the west; he has six faces, six arms and six feet, rides a great white ox and carries various weapons in his hands to destroy all poisonous serpents and evil dragons. Kōngō-yasha (*Vajra-jyōkyō*) Myōō sits in the north, wrapped with flames; he has three faces and six arms, carries various weapons in his hands and destroys all the fierce yōkai (devils). Lastly, the Great Holy One, i.e. Daiinichi Daitō Fudō (*Mahāśūryama Tōdōgata*) takes in order to conquer all evil spirits. His right hand clasps a sword, which symbolizes the infinite wisdom of the Great Sun Buddha, and his left hand holds a rope, which symbolizes Buddha's supreme love. He stands on a rock amid the flaming fire. See also Vol. 1, *Fine-Book*, p. 182, note.

<sup>2</sup> This is a romantic reproduction of a Chinese transcription of a *dharmā*. A *dharmā* is a passage of Sanskrit which is left untranslated in Chinese Buddhist texts, because, if translated, it would lose its mystical meaning. In the present case the *dharmā* is a formula for vanquishing evil spirits. It is used in exorcism by a devotee of Fudō Myōō (*Avalokiteśvara*). The original Sanskrit reads: *Namah Samanta-Vajrapāṇam candra-mukha-ropana spharyaya bhūya trāsa bhāga māya* ("I dedicate myself to the Universal Diamond. Be this raging fury destroyed! etc.") ["Universal Diamond" is a symbol of all virtues and powers]

Rokujō

Chorus  
*kiri*



How fearful is the chanting of the *sutra* !  
My end at last has come.

Never again will come the evil spirit.

Hearing the voice of incantation,

Hearing the voice of incantation,

Gentle grows the demon's heart.

Forbearance and mercy incarnate,

Bodhisattva comes to meet her.

She enters Nirvana

Out of life and death—Buddha be praised !

Out of life and death—Buddha be praised !



*Rokujō rises, as if  
rid of cares.*

*Rokujō goes to the  
Shite Seat, clasping  
her hands in adoration,  
and stamps twice.*