

THE STONE GOD.

Translated by
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Shite husband (Tarô)

costume: vest and matching *hakama* (*kyôgen kamishimo*) worn over a striped robe (*shima noshime*);

change of costume: removes vest and puts on an unlined jacket (*mizugoromo*), a cord to tie back the sleeves, and a square beret which folds forward and is tied with an embroidered string (*sumizukin*).

Ado woman (Tarô's wife)

costume: a satin, embroidered robe worn mainly by women characters (*nuihaku*), a long, narrow belt tied in the back and allowed to drape (*onna obi*), a length of white, cotton cloth bound turban style around the head and tied in front with both ends draping down to below the waist (*binan bôshi*).

Ado go-between

costume: vest and matching *hakama* that trail (*naga kamishimo*) worn over a robe with wide stripes (*dan noshime*), and a small sword indicating social status.

(Husband enters stage followed by the go-between who seats himself at upstage left (before the flute position). The husband announces himself at upstage right (the jôza) position.)

Husband: I live around here. My wife's such a shrew but then, when it comes to housework, she's at it nonstop from morning to night. Lucky for me, I can go off and have a good time, leaving everything to her. But now it seems that she's gotten fed up with me and this morning she just took off. She must have gone to see the gentleman who counsels her. I'll head over there and get him to stop her.

(K6)

[michi-yukji] Without rush or fuss, I'm on my way. *(He begins to walk.)* Of course, up to now, she's begged me over and over again, 'Give me a divorce! Give me a divorce!' But it'd be rather inconvenient right now, so I've refused. I suppose she couldn't take any more and walked out on me. *(Circles the stage and stops at the jōza.)* Ah hai! I was talking away to myself and I've already arrived. Now, I'll announce myself. Hello? Anyone there?

(The go-between stands.)

Go-between: Hai! Someone's out front. Who is it? Who's there?

(He comes forward to downstage left, waki position.)

Husband: It's me.

Go-between: Oh, it's you then?

Husband: Now then, has the wife been here?

Go-between: I haven't seen her. What's all the fuss?

Husband: It's just that lately she keeps begging for a divorce. But, as you well know, she's the one who does all the work. When I told her I wouldn't let her go, she got mad and this morning she went off in a huff somewhere. I'm sure she'll show up here. I'd be grateful if you could smooth things over and put a stop to this.

Go-between: Oh dear! What a pity! But it's all because you go off, a day here, a night there, without the least regard for your home. She's been coming recently, asking me to help her get a divorce but I've held her back, urging her that in spite of everything she should, 'endure! endure!' And now, it seems that the strings of her endurance have snapped. Well, from all she's said to me in private, this was only to be expected. I can't stop her now.

Husband: But that's only how you see it. From now on I'll be home absolutely every single night. Couldn't you take my side just this once and smooth things over. I'll be forever in your debt.

Go-between: If that's how it is then I'll think of something. If she turns up I'll try to reason with her. You go hide inside.

Husband: Yes sir.

(The go-between returns to his seat before the flute position while the husband sits beside him facing the back of the stage. The wife enters and stops at the jōza position.)

Wife:

I'm the wife of Taro of this neighborhood. That man goes traipsing off through the three realms and cares nothing for his home.² He stays away night and day. Why he even makes me fix the leaks in the roof! That's the kind of man I've married. I'll never be able to depend on him for anything. That's why I left him this morning and I'm going home to my parents. But first, I'll stop by and say goodbye to the gentleman who advises me. Then I'll leave for home.

[michi-yukji]

Without rush or fuss, I'm on my way. *(She begins to walk.)* Oh, but really, I work all alone, day in, day out without rest. I wouldn't mind so much if he were only satisfied with that, but no, it's not enough for him. He goes wandering off looking for a good time. I'm completely fed up. *(Circles the stage and stops at the jōza.)* Well! Here I am. First, I'll announce myself. Excuse me? Hello?

(Go-between stands.)

Go-between: Hai! There's someone calling out front. Who is it? Who's there?

(He comes forward to the waki seat.)

Wife: It's me.

Go-between: Oh! There's no need for such formality. Now then, what brings you here today?

Wife:

It's just that I've come on a personal matter. Until now when I've begged you over and over to help me to get a divorce, you've urged me to, 'Bear up! Bear up!' and so I have. But even though I work without rest, he still won't change his

ways. I'm completely fed up so I walked out on him this morning. I'm going back to my parents. You've been so kind to me that I came by to let you know of my decision.

Go-between: Goodness gracious! What a pity! But if you're so adamant, then I won't try to stop you. I'll leave you to your own decision. However, do listen carefully. You're still a young woman and therefore, you'll have to remarry. If you go to a better home than his, not only you, but I too will be satisfied. But, since happiness is pre-destined for each of us at birth, it is not entirely impossible that you may end up somewhere worse. If that should happen it would all be for nothing. This is what I suggest. Since Yasha, the God of Izumoji, is said to work miracles, why not go to Izumoji and make up your mind after consulting the God.³ How about it?

Wife: That's very sensible. All right, I'll follow your advice. I'll decide according to the predictions of Yasha.

Go-between: Splendid! Very wise. Now then, on your way!

Wife: I'm off.

Go-between: Here, here! There are many pilgrims to Izumoji during the day, so you'd better wait until dusk.

Wife: Of course. Now then, now then . . .

Go-between: Go in peace.

Wife: Yes sir.

(Wife sits at the rear of the stage, the kôkenza position, facing the rear.)

Go-between: *(proceeds to the jôza position)* Hey! hey! Come on out.

Husband: Yes sir.

(He comes forward to the wakiza position.)

Go-between: Well, did you hear that just now?

Husband: Yes, and I thank you for coming up with such a clever scheme.

Go-between: Dress up as Yasha and go to Izumoji. In the confusion of the dark, think up a way to stop her.

Husband: Whatever. As long as she comes, I can stop her. But, as I'm dressed now, I don't look the least like the God, Yasha. Please get me a disguise.

Go-between: Quite right. Wait here a moment and I'll find something for you.

Husband: Yes sir.

(The stage hand (kôken) brings out a Bishamon mask⁴, a hat, and a set of robes.)

Go-between: Here! I've just the thing. Now sit down.

Husband: Of course. *(sits at stage center.)* Well, well! From first to last I owe everything to you.

(During the following exchange, the husband changes his robes with the assistance of the go-between.)

Go-between: What do you think? Isn't this just the thing?

Husband: Perfect.

Go-between: All right! It looks fine. Stand up.

(He proceeds to the jôza.)

Husband: Of course, sir.

(He dons the hat and dressed in the robes with a mask in his hand, he heads for the wakiza position.)

Husband: Now then, the time has come. I'll be off.

Go-between: Excellent. Don't slip up.

Husband: How could I? Now then, now then . . .

Go-between: Quickly!

Husband: Yes sir!

(Go-between exits.)

Husband: Oh ho! Splendid! Splendid! Now then, I'm off to Izumoji.

(He proceeds to the jōza position and faces front.)

[Imichi-yuki] (He begins to circle the stage.) Thanks to that fellow's clever scheme, my wife will surely come to pray. If she'll just come, I can think of a way to bring her around. (Circles the stage and stops at stage center.) What's this? While I've been chattering away to myself, I've already arrived. Now then, I'll just move the Stone God out of the way. (He goes to the wakiza position and mimes the removal of the Stone God from his seat on the barrel, *kazura*, which the stage hand has placed on stage.) With a yo-heave-ho! That'll do it! Perfect. And now, for tonight I shall be Yasha and so await my wife.

(He dons the mask and seats himself on the barrel at the wakiza position. His wife enters and stands at the jōza position.)

Wife: What my gentleman said just now was quite sensible. I'll go to Izumoji. It's finally getting dark.

[Imichi-yuki] Without rushing or fussing I'll stroll along. (She begins to walk.) Truly, I've made up my mind this time. I'll return to my parents. Then again, my gentleman's advice makes sense. In any case, I'll decide according to Yasha's predictions. (She circles the stage and stops at the jōza position.) Well! Here I am at Izumoji. I'll worship first. (She sits and, opening her fan, places it before her. Making a wide sweep with her arms, she claps her hands together in prayer.) Hear my request. I cannot depend on my man for anything. Therefore, I want to leave him and go home to my parents. It's said that happiness is pre-destined for each of us at birth, and so, I've come to ask the Stone God's advice. If the God rises then I'll

return home to my parents. If, on the other hand, the God does not rise, I'll stay with him. Please grant my request. As long as I've gone this far, I may as well sing along. (She circles behind the man.)

"Will I attain my love?

Will I triumph in the end?"

Rise! Rise! Up! Up! Rise up, oh Stone God! Please rise!
Please rise! Please rise! Please rise!

(The husband holds firm so that she can't pry him up.)

Ooh! This is pitiful! So pitiful! Even when I pull, I can't budge him. This means that I've got to stay married to that man!

(She returns to stage center and weeps.)

There's no point in doubting the heart of a God.⁶ And yet, although you cannot alter your destiny, I still don't want to go back to him. This time, if I can't make him rise, then I'll go home to my parents. But, if on the other hand, he does rise, then I'll make up my mind to stay with my husband. Now, I shall ask once again.

(She circles behind the man again.)

"Only look and you will fall in love.

But, if you don't look,

—what if it is the second coming

of the Bodhisattva Monju,

or even Middle Counselor Yukihira?—

If you don't look, it comes to nothing."⁷

Don't rise!

(With both hands she presses down on his shoulders but he rises anyway. She weeps.)

Oooh! This is miserable! Just miserable! He got up with no effort at all. I suppose, no matter what, I must return to that man.

(She goes back to stage center and weeps.)

It's hopeless. I guess I'll return to my husband. Since I've put the God to so much trouble, I can't simply withdraw from his presence like this. I come from a family of shamans, so I'll offer a Kagura dance and purify the grounds before I leave.

(She retires to the rear of the stage and returns with shinto bells with five colored streamers attached. From upstage center, the *daishōmae* position, she begins.)

Wife: (at the *daishōmae* position)

The stone in the distant offering too
is the stone seat of Holy Ebisu.⁸

(She begins to dance. She opens the fan and takes it in her left hand; her bells are in her right hand. The flute and the *ko-tsutsumi* hand drum accompany her. The man peeks at her from time to time, pushing his mask comically to the side without letting the woman see.)⁹

Wife: (at the *daishōmae* position)

With the holy Kagura dance, we offer thanks. Let our lives be long and safe from disaster. (She resumes dancing. As before she dances with the bells. The man pushes back his mask to watch. He finally removes the mask and holding it on his hand, he gets up to mimic the woman, dancing behind her. Suddenly, she spots him.)

Wife: Hey you! You've gotten yourself up as Yasha, haven't you!

(The man quickly dons the mask and sits.)

Husband: I am the Stone God.

Wife: At it again are you? Rascal!

(She chases him around the stage.)

Husband: Please forgive me! Forgive me!

(Dodging her, he runs up the bridgetway, *hashigakari*.)

Wife: You, man! Where do you think you're going? Somebody grab him! You won't get away with this! You won't get away with this!

(She chases after him.)

Husband: Please forgive me! Forgive me!

(He runs off stage.)

Wife: You won't get away with this! You won't get away with this!
(She chases him off and exits.)

This translation of the *kyōgen* *Ishigami* is based on the text found in Koyama Hiroshi, ed., *Kyōgenshū II. Nihon koten bungaku taikai*, vol. 43 (Iwanami Shoten, 1961) pp. 37-44.

NOTES

1. Michiyuki: travel scene involving a complete circling of the stage.
2. The three realms: originally referred to Buddhism's three realms of existence but here has come to mean the entire world.
3. Izumoji is the area north of the palace of Kyoto. The Sai shrine in this area is dedicated to the popular god, Sarutahiko, who is said to be the guardian of wedding vows. The Yasha god of the play appears to be related in some way to the shrine.
4. Bishamon: one of the popular gods of fortune.

5. A popular song (*kouta*) of the Muromachi period versions of which can be found in the kyōgen play, *Hanago*, in the *Tenshōbon* text, and in the *Sōan koutashū*, a collection of popular songs.
6. A popular saying which appears in the *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*.
7. *Kouta*, origins unknown.
8. A prayer to the popular god of fortune, Ebisu, who appears dressed as a fisherman.
9. As the woman performs the *kagura* her husband watches and grins at the audience. Finally, unable to restrain himself, he gets up and mimics her gestures from behind, continuing to laugh to the audience.